Diversity and the Environment Webinar Series

Presented by:

Racial Diversity in the U.S. Climate Movement

TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2020
12:00 PM-1:00 PM ET
Webinar Logistics

Everyone should be connected via Audio Broadcast upon entering the webinar. You do not need to call in & you are automatically muted.

The presentation will be recorded and posted to the Antioch CCPCR website within one week.

Please submit any questions you have for the presenter in the Q&A section.

If you are having trouble with any aspect of the broadcast, use the Chat section to message the Host directly.
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Racial Diversity in the U.S. Climate Movement

Clara Fang

Antioch University
March 17, 2020
What we are going to cover

1. Why and what is diversity?
2. How are we doing?
3. Building a just and inclusive climate movement
Why diversity?
Reflections on the Coronavirus and the Oneness of Humanity

Homa Sabet Tavangar  •  Mar 4, 2020  •  19 Comments
Nature thrives on diversity
POC Voters are Increasingly Determining Outcomes of Elections

Image from: [https://www.lwvga.org/how-safe-are-georgias-elections/](https://www.lwvga.org/how-safe-are-georgias-elections/)
People of color are usually the hardest hit from the effects of climate change.
100-200%  
More heat related deaths among African Americans

90%  
Increase in heat related deaths due to climate change

71%  
African Americans living in counties in violation of federal air pollution standards (compared to 58% for whites)
People of color in the United States perceive greater risks for threats posed by climate change than whites, even when controlled for age, gender, household income, education, political views, and rural/urban place of residence.

Reported Benefits of Diversity to Organizations

Reported Benefits of Diversity to the Environmental Sector

FIGURE 2: REPORTED BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL SECTOR

Environmental Organizations Risk Becoming Irrelevant

Without support of POC, the environment risks being marginalized as a “white, upper-middle class, suburban, boutique-y” issue that doesn’t speak to the reality of the vast majority of people in the US and around the world.” (Park 2009)

“Talented people who do not identify with the dominant culture will feel undervalued, unappreciated, burned out, and leave the organization or the movement all together.” (Bonta 2008)
What do we mean by diversity?
Distinctions among Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity

DIVERSITY of people, perspectives

INCLUSION: power, voice, organizational culture

EQUITY = IMPACT from policy, practice, position

TO BE...

Loved, Present

Needed, Invited

Befriended, Welcomed

Cared For, Known

Supported, Accepted
How are we doing?
POC Are Underrepresented in Environmental Organizations

Diversity in Top 40 Env NGOs

For the third year in a row, Green 2.0, an independent advocacy campaign to increase racial and ethnic diversity among the top 40 mainstream environmental movement NGOs and its top 40 funders, presents diversity data from the movement’s largest organizations. As in 2017 and 2018, the 2019 Green 2.0 Transparency Report reflects data collected from the NGOs and Foundations on the number of women and people of color on their full-time staff, senior staff, and boards as collected through Green 2.0’s partnership with Guidestar by Candid. The full report shows the individual data for the top 40 NGOs and funders as reported over the three years.
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“Young people are already building separate lanes of influence on climate change. Their leadership, messaging and organizing strategies are noticeably more inclusive and racially diverse than the institutions that comprise the wider movement. They are nimble and rapidly responsive, and they are in part because they are the communities they are trying to save. We trust that the longstanding, mainstream environmental movement can push itself to remain relevant by evolving similarly and rapidly.”
There is no data on diversity in the climate movement!
Racial diversity at Citizens' Climate Lobby
Climate movement

“When I joined the climate movement, I thought there would be swaths of students of color like me. That wasn't the case.

“Certain individuals tended to dominate discussions.”

“A member of Extinction Rebellion spoke at a Fridays for Future meeting about minors volunteering themselves to get arrested. No person of color in their right mind would ever willingly get arrested, when the stakes include police brutality.”

Cynthia Leung says she noticed a lack of diversity at Fridays for Future meetings. Photo by Izzie Ramirez from https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/43kn7b/the-climate-movement-needs-to-make-teens-of-color-feel-more-welcome

Cynthia Leung; New York
Uganda Climate Activist Cropped Out of Photo

Climate activists Vanessa Nakate, Luisa Neubauer, Greta Thunberg, Isabelle Axelsson and Loukina Tille, from left, arrive for a news conference in Davos. A Kampala native, Nakate is the founder of the climate action groups Youth for Future Africa and the Rise Up Movement.

I was not on the list of participants. None of my comments from the press conference were included,” she said. “It was like I wasn’t even there.”

Pursued by a media scrum ever since arriving at the two-week conference last week after crossing the Atlantic by catamaran, Thunberg stayed largely silent during her first official appearance at the UN climate summit, to allow a young Native American, a Ugandan, a Philippine and a Pacific islander to speak.

“Their rights are being violated across the world and they are also among the ones being hit the most and the quickest by the climate and environmental emergency,” Thunberg said of indigenous communities.

Jamie Margolin

Jamie is a Colombian-American writer, community organizer, activist, and public speaker living in Seattle, Washington. She is the founder of Zero Hour, an international youth climate justice movement.

Her identity as a Latina Jewish lesbian drives her passion to fight for those who are oppressed and marginalized.

Image from https://www.internationalcongressofyouthvoices.com/jamie-margolin
“Attending the climate strike in Washington, D.C., was everything I wanted but also dreaded. We had amazing speakers — our own organizers! But a diverse group of organizers didn’t mean a diverse group of participants. Talking about my experiences to a crowd of thousands was amazing, but it was discouraging how few of the faces in the crowd looked like me. It showed how the climate movement needs a drastic change toward diversity before we can truly be intersectional and effective.”

Isra Hirsi on Mar 25, 2019

Isra Hirsi, photo by Colin Michael Simmons
Autumn Peltier

Autumn is a Canadian water activist and she advocates for clean drinking in First Nations communities and across Mother Earth. She comes from Wikwemikong First Nation/Manitoulin Island and is from Ojibway/Odawa heritage (on Manitoulin Island in northern Ontario)

She has spoken at the United Nations World Water Day on March 22, 2018, been honoured by the Assembly of First Nations as a water protector, and travelled to Stockholm, Sweden, for World Water Week in August 2018, invited by the United Nations as a Keynote speaker.

Indigenous water activist Autumn Peltier, 15, addresses a forum at the UN.
Image from https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/canadian-indigenous-water-activist-autumn-peltier-addresses-un-on-clean-water-1.5301559
Helena Gualinga

Gualinga is a spokesperson for her Sarayaku Indigenous community. Her activism includes exposing the conflict between her community and oil companies by carrying an empowering message among the youth in local schools in Ecuador.

In her message, she exposes how Indigenous communities in the Amazon have experienced climate change. She includes the higher prevalence of fires, flood-related diseases and devastation, desertification, and the faster melting of mountain peak glaciers experienced during the life time of the elder members of her community as first-hand evidence of climate change.
Leah Namugerwa

“I want to raise a generation that cares about the environment.”

Leah is a 15-year-old Ugandan activist, who co-runs Africa’s most prominent chapter of Fridays for Future.

She in her short time as a climate activist, she had met with foreign ambassadors and Uganda’s speaker of parliament and attended conferences in Rwanda, Kenya, and Switzerland.
Barriers of History and Culture
Clara’s Story

Privileges

○ Grew up in Shanghai and Washington DC
○ Parents with higher education
○ Only child
○ Conservation ethic
○ Outdoor experiences
○ Elite education (Smith, Yale)
○ Asian positive bias
Clara’s story

Disadvantages
- Political trauma
- Shanghai in the 1980s
- Immigration
- Economic hardship
- Being a minority
- Millennial economic reality
Environmental Privilege

1. I grew up in a town with clean air.
2. My family owned our home.
3. My home had a backyard.
4. My parents were health conscious and provided a healthy diet.
5. I lived in proximity to parks, gardens, and greenspaces.
6. I went on camping trips and nature excursions as a child or young adult.
7. My family was environmentally conscious.
8. I had environmental education in school (K-12).
9. My parents were politically active.
10. I or my family volunteered for environmental or charity organizations.
Early Environmental Organizations

- Beneficiaries of capitalism, institutional racism, and patriarchy.
- Excluded membership from women, people of color, and poor people.
- Uninterested in addressing social inequalities like slavery, the oppression of women, and the abuse of labor.
Their Agendas were Harmful to Native Americans and POC

- Took land from Native American tribes to make room for new national parks and monuments.
- Willfully annexed land from Latinos, and incited violence on those that resisted.
- Dispossessed land promised to newly emancipated black citizens after the Civil War.

“Nightfall on the Trail of Tears” painting by R. Michelson
Build A Just & Inclusive Climate Movement

What Can We Do?
Acknowledge that we have a problem!

Listen, gather information
Talk about diversity
Share diversity data
Make known that you want to work on it
Talk to experts

Image from: https://myrecovery.com/alcoholics-anonymous-meetings-asheville-north-carolina/
Citizens’ Climate Lobby Core Values

Diversity

We empower everyone in exercising their personal and political power regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, ability or political affiliation. We seek out, support, and elevate people whose voices may not have been fully heard.
Focus on inclusion, not diversity

“who you invite to the party shows diversity and who you ask to dance demonstrates inclusion. Belonging is dancing without being judged, owning the dance-floor and not feeling like a gatecrasher!”

--Zarina Ahmad from CEMVO

Image from:
Focus on inclusion, not diversity

- **Work on self-transformation**
  - Become educated, read books
  - Anti-oppression workshops, trainings, and conversations
  - Provide resources for education and connection

- **Practice radical hospitality**
  - Become an ally
  - Personal contact
  - Invite participation
  - Go to where they are
  - Be reciprocal
  - Be careful about “outreach”

CCL Arkansas chapter meeting
Embrace environmental justice framing

“When we talk about the climate crisis and we don’t talk about these communities [of color] that are being affected, we create this circle of it becoming a white issue, or an issue that doesn’t care about black and brown bodies, and that allows for solutions that don’t care about black and brown bodies.”

Elevate marginalized voices

- Invite people of color to be speakers
- Invite people of color to take leadership roles
- Highlight stories about people of color

Institute inclusive hiring & retention practices

- Transparent job openings
- Equitable pay
- Paid internships
- Blind application review
- Paying special attention to applicants of color
- Affinity groups
- Mentoring people of color and helping them succeed
Citizens’ Climate Lobby:
Things we did in the beginning

- Commissioned diversity research
  - How diverse is CCL?
  - How do our members think we are doing on diversity?
  - What resources do people need?
- Created a diversity committee
- Invited experts to speak to us
- Already had a Latino outreach manager
- Created a strategic plan

Image from: https://uvfm.org/
Phase 1

- Changed our mission statement to include a 6th diversity value
- Incorporated diversity as an overarching strategic initiative
- Got diverse speakers for our national conference
- Included diverse representation in our branding
- Promoted diversity coordinator to manager
- Provided scholarships for young people and people of color to attend our conference
- Translated our outreach materials into Spanish
- Conducted diversity workshops at our regional conferences
- Conducted diversity outreach training at national conference
Phase 2?

- Anti-oppression training for all staff and volunteers
- Paid internships and fellowships
- Diversity outreach toolkit
- Race conscious hiring
- Inviting new partners to the table
- Events and programs just for POC
- Civic engagement training for marginalized people
- Continued evaluation
Resources
Database of Fabulous Leaders

People Of Color in Environmental & Climate Justice

- A one-stop-site for speakers, consultants, potential hires, board members, advisory group and steering committee members.
- Database was designed to specifically address and eliminate the age old lamentation, “but I couldn’t find any people of color.”

- Keynote speakers AESS compilation
Websites and Organizations

1. Residenceonearth.net/diversity
2. Green 2.0 diversegreen.org
3. Center for Diversity and the Environment
4. EJ Leadership Forum on Climate Change
5. Center for Whole Communities
6. Diversity Matters, LLC
7. https://www.diversegreen.org/resources/
Diversity Research Reports

1. Diversifying the U.S. Climate Movement
2. Diversity and Climate Change: Four Interviews
3. CCL Diversity Survey

In 2018 CCL commissioned three studies on diversity, climate change, and CCL. These reports are available at Residenceonearth.net/diversity.
Reports

Leaking Talent
How People of Color are Pushed Out of Environmental Organizations

Beyond Diversity
A ROADMAP TO BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATION

The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations
Mainstream NGOs Foundations Government Agencies

https://www.diversegreen.org/


   https://www.diversegreen.org/beyond-diversity/

2. Enderle, E., Yale University, & School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. (2007). Diversity and the future of the U.S. environmental movement. Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies.


   https://www.diversegreen.org/leaking-talent/


Conclusion

1. The climate movement currently has a gap in diversity, presenting a huge opportunity.
2. Diversity is a huge challenge and to be successful requires commitment, strategy, and resources.
3. This commitment to diversity is everybody’s responsibility.
Conclusion

Lilla Watson at the 1985 United Nations Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi. Lilla has said of this quote that she was "not comfortable being credited for something that had been born of a collective process" and prefers that it be credited to "Aboriginal activists group, Queensland, 1970s."

'If you have come to help me you are wasting your time.

If you have come because your Liberation is bound together with mine, let us walk together'.
Questions?
Save the Date!

Environmental Advocacy Symposium

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2020
Save the Date!
Combating Incivility, Harassment, and Sexual Assault in Environmental Fields and Fieldwork

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2020 – 12:00-1:00 PM ET

Marisa A. Rinkus
Center for Interdisciplinarity, Michigan State University

Erika Marin-Spiotta
Professor of Geography, University of Wisconsin Madison and Lead PI for the ADVANCEGeo Partnership