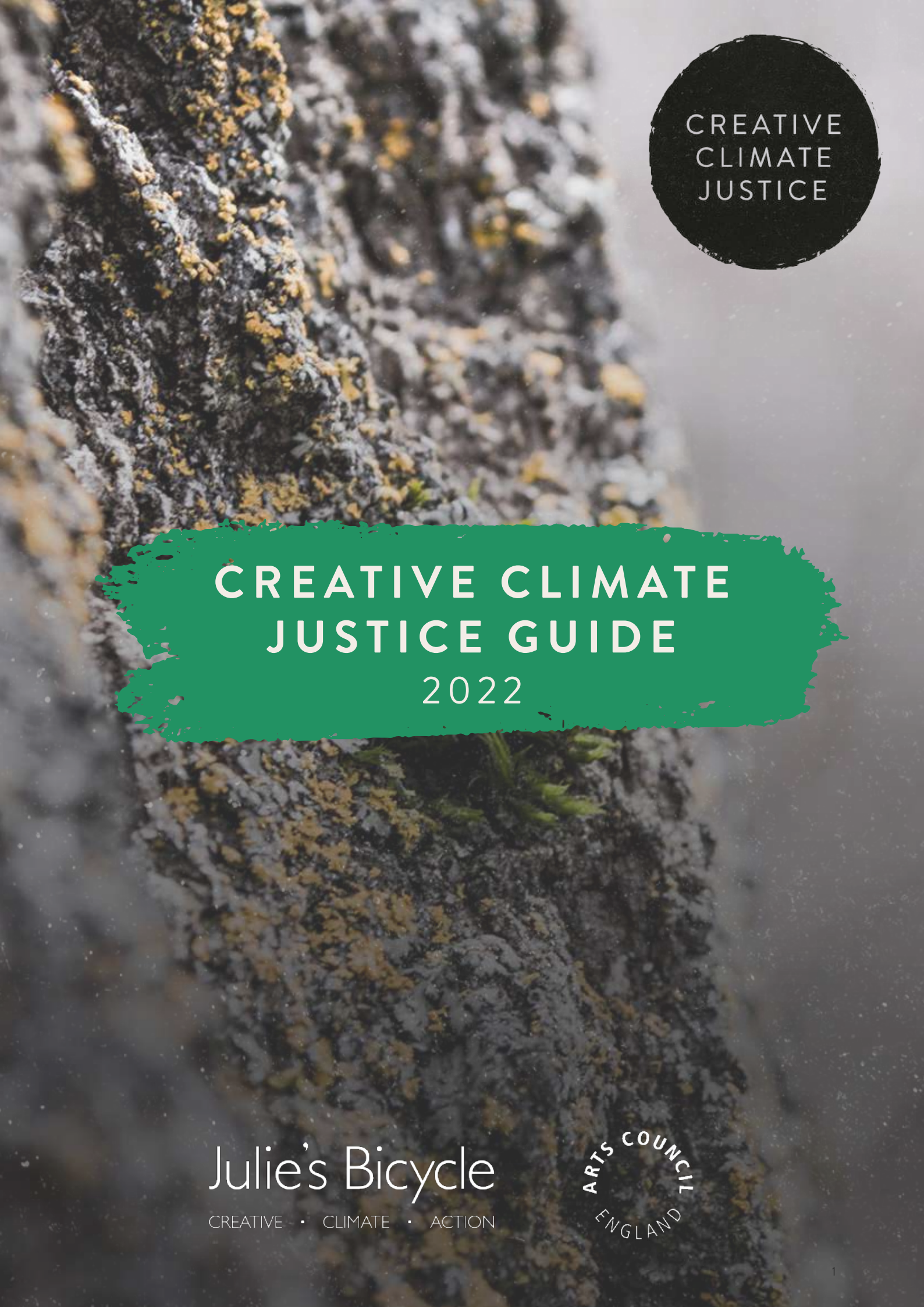


CREATIVE CLIMATE JUSTICE

CREATIVE CLIMATE JUSTICE GUIDE

2022

Julie's Bicycle

CREATIVE · CLIMATE · ACTION

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

CREATIVE CLIMATE JUSTICE

Contents page

Image credit: Climate emergency artivism campaign Barranquilla+20

Foreword

By Farah Ahmed

Climate justice is the defining issue of our time. It reaches into every facet of our lives, from where we can live in safety, to what we eat and drink, to how deeply we can breathe.

In April 2022, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the **final report** of its sixth comprehensive review of climate change. The report - which focuses on mitigation of climate change - recognises that the historical and ongoing drivers of climate and environmental destruction **lie in colonialism**. This significant inclusion builds on what climate and environmental justice campaigners have known for decades: power structures which serve profit over the planet come at the expense of countless lives and ecosystems, and it is imperative that we centre justice, regeneration, and reparation in climate action.

To do this we need arts and culture to lead the way, telling braver stories about the systems dictating how we live, and the limitless possibilities for a better world. We need to work alongside scientists, activists, grassroots campaigners, frontline communities, youth, lawyers, farmers, architects, doctors, and policymakers to build creative, multifaceted and powerful movements for justice.

This collaborative spirit is the heart of what we are working on at Julie's Bicycle. We recognise that climate justice might be a new or daunting concept, so we're compiling a suite of resources, webinars, and guides to support you on your journey.

This collaborative spirit is the heart of what we are working on at Julie's Bicycle.

It is an honour to work with Harpreet Kaur Paul on this introductory guide to some of the key issues and challenges of climate and environmental justice.

Harpreet Kaur Paul has been dreaming, writing, and organising for collective liberation and freedom for as long as she can remember. She is a mum, human rights lawyer, climate justice PhD candidate and co-founder of **Tipping Point UK**.

Introduction

An overview of climate justice

Decades of scientific knowledge about the scale of the climate crisis has not halted record breaking levels of emissions driving unprecedented warm weather. The last eight years have been the hottest on record[1]. Annual climate change conferences coincide with storms, wildfires and news of alarming levels of carbon in our atmosphere. States have failed to curtail greenhouse gas emissions. They have also failed to ensure that those on the frontline of climate impacts have the resources that they need to respond with dignity. Minimizing economic disruption has been prioritised over protecting people and planet. This requires mass cultural and popular resistance to ensure equity for current and future generations.

Those that benefit most from "business-as-usual" are also responsible for the most carbon pollution. In contrast, the global poor generate minimal greenhouse gas emissions but are disproportionately impacted by climate change impacts – while being least resourced to respond.[2] This requires a global response that is fair and just. Lifestyles of carbon intensive luxury in a context of global energy poverty cannot continue. We must build fairer and greener societies as we transition.

At the same time, we need to adapt to the now inevitable climatic changes already baked-in as a result of historic greenhouse gas emissions. Examples of adaptation measures include promoting agroecology, using scarce water resources more efficiently, reimagining access to housing, requiring any new construction to meet building codes that are not only generating more energy than they use, but also able to withstand new climate conditions and extreme weather events, building flood defences, and setting aside land corridors to help species migrate.

Those that benefit most from "business-as-usual" are also responsible for the most carbon pollution.

Critically, we must provide reparations for communities facing unavoidable, unmanaged or unmanageable impacts associated with climate change (referred to as Loss and Damage). This means exploring mechanisms for innovatively and urgently raising funds for those already experiencing the negative impacts negative impacts of climate change. In a way that protects, respects and promotes human flourishing within our planetary boundaries.

[1] Josh Davis, 'The last eight years have been the hottest on record,' Natural History Museum, 14 January 2022
[2] Oxfam, Confronting Carbon Inequality, 21 September 2020

Glossary of key terms

Ecocide

The mass damage or destruction of ecosystems, with long term or widespread impacts.

Neoliberalism

A political framework centred on free-market capitalism and deregulation.

Terra nullius

Terra nullius is a Latin term meaning “nobody’s land”. Colonisation and land laws were established on the claim that lands were empty, justifying acquisition without treaty or payment

Decolonisation

The practice of undoing centuries of harm inflicted onto people and ecosystems by colonial rule, through reclamation of lands, practices, languages, and knowledges.

Net Zero

Net Zero refers to the balance between the amount of greenhouse gas produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere. Crucially, this is not the same as ‘zero carbon’, which means that no carbon is emitted at all.

Indigenous Peoples

Cultural groups with distinct traditions, social or political frameworks, and with ancestral ties to the lands and ecologies where they live, or from which they have been displaced. There are an estimated 370 million Indigenous people spread across 70 countries worldwide.

Environmental justice

Environmental justice is deeply tied to, but distinct from, climate justice. It is specifically about the inequitable exposure to hazards such as air and water pollution, chemicals, waste, and ecological destruction of marginalised people and ecosystems.

Decolonisation

An overview of climate justice

Colonialism and the fossil fuel era reconfigured the world economy, bloating Europe's wealth at the expense of colonised communities and enslaved peoples.[3] This wealth eventually enabled the industrial revolution, creating today's context where the Global North is responsible for 92% of the world's excess emissions,[4] despite only hosting around 12% of the world's population.

The legacies and impacts of slavery, colonialism, and discrimination continue to be felt today, due to historic and continuing exploitation, extraction, and marginalisation. Colonial practices (such as producing sugar, coffee, rice, and cotton cultivation on large slave plantations) continue to be good predictors of poverty levels today.[5] Neoliberal trade and investment policies continue to impoverish workers, expose communities to pollution, and encourage countries to repay unjust loans over investing in health, education, social care, green transport and resilient infrastructure. Multinational corporations extract, exploit and then hide funds in tax havens, essentially looting the Global South.[6] As a result, climate change impacts are disproportionately felt in countries exposed to colonialism and are least responsible for emissions historically.

Wealth increases adaptive capacity. Those most responsible for climate change are relatively insulated from its impacts. The world's richest 10% cause 50% of emissions, claim 52% of the world's wealth, and are concentrated in North America and the EU.[7]

The world's poorest 50% contribute approximately 10% of global emissions and receive about 8% of global income.[8] The average CO^2 emissions (metric tons per capita) of citizens in countries most vulnerable to climate change impacts, are significantly lower than those in the Global North. For example...

Mozambique	0.1
Malawi	0.9
Zimbabwe	0.9

pale in comparison to the average emissions of a person in

U.S	15.5
Canada	15.3
Australia	15.8
UK	6*

[3] Jason Hickel, How Britain stole $45 trillion from India And lied about it. Al Jazeera, 19 Dec 2018; Thomas Craemer, There was a time reparations were actually paid out – just not to formerly enslaved people, The Conversation, 26 February 2021

[4] Rishika Pardikar, Global North Is Responsible for 92% of Excess Emissions The United States and European Union bear disproportionate liability for emitting to the atmospheric commons, EOS, 28 October 2020

[5] Miriam Bruhn, "Did Yesterday's Patterns of Colonial Exploitation Determine Today's Patterns of Poverty?." World Bank blogs, (23 Nov 2010).

[6] Global Justice Now, Africa subsidises the rest of the world by over $40 billion in one year, according to new research, 24 May 2017

[7] Oxfam, Confronting Carbon Inequality

[8] Oxfam, Confronting Carbon Inequality

* Harpreet K Paul, 'We need climate reparations to confront the colonial past' 13 April 2021; Civil Society Review 2019

Continued →

In sum, the global poor – many of whom survive on less than USD$5.50 per day – generate almost no greenhouse gas emissions but are disproportionately impacted by climate change impacts.

Most of the Global North's green transition plans rely in part on natural gas schemes and biofuels in the Global South - for example, increased development of eucalyptus monoculture plantations in the Global South Across Latin America, South East Asia and Africa. Such schemes have led to land-grabs and deforestation – both of which threaten food supplies – as well as increased carbon emissions.[10] In Kenya, geothermal plants not only threaten biodiversity, but have also displaced Indigenous peoples such as the Maasai from their sacred territories.[11]

Green transition plans tend not to promote community-powered local energy projects, which have the potential to create social value rather than profits for multinational energy companies. Proposals to cover the western Sahara in solar panels are based on the idea of "*terra nullius*", that the desert is just empty space in which European and US companies could generate energy for consumers back home in the Global North.[12] Israel's reputation as a solar hub is built on solar fields in the occupied West Bank, where Palestinians have no consistent energy supply. Even efforts to protect and conserve ecosystems are caught up in notions of ownership that can dispossess Indigenous and tribal peoples from the areas they have stewarded in the name of ecological protection. Some so-called "nature based solutions" are actively harmful, and propose using large swathes of land in the Global South to grow huge tree plantations to allow countries in the Global North to continue to pollute, while local communities are displaced, and water redirected.

Green transition plans tend not to promote community-powered local energy projects, which have the potential to create social value rather than profits for multinational energy companies.

[10] www.biofuelwatch.org.uk

[11] Nafees Ahmed, 'World Bank and UN carbon offset scheme 'complicit' in genocidal land grabs – NGOs,' The Guardian, 3 July 2014; Survival International, 'The most inconvenient truth of all: climate change and Indigenous people,' (2009); Climate Home News, 'Carbon offsets have patchy human rights record. Now UN talks erode safeguards,' (9 December 2019).

[12] Hamza Hamouchene, 'Green Energy Grabs,' in Perspectives on a Global Green New Deal, eds Harpreet Kaur Paul and Dalia Gebrial

Natural Resources

Extraction is catastrophic for people and planet. It is also violent for communities on the frontlines of pipelines. In Ogoniland in Nigeria, Shell Oil has dumped an estimated 9 to 13 million barrels of crude oil into the Niger Delta since 1958. This has led to polluted air and water as well as decimating natural habitats, violating the rights of the 832,000 people who live there. The local government has also worked with Shell to suppress the right of people in Ogoniland to fight against the pollution.

Ken Henshaw writes of Shell and the Nigerian's state complicity in protest crackdowns, massacres, and repression since 1958. He writes that thousands of community members have been killed, raped and exiled, including the leadership of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People, and Ken Saro Wiwa. The human rights violations continue, in 2019 alone, Ken writes that three communities in the Niger Delta were attacked and burnt by the military, and "Today, after 6 decades of oil extraction, the Niger Delta is one of the most polluted, poverty stricken and militarized places on earth."

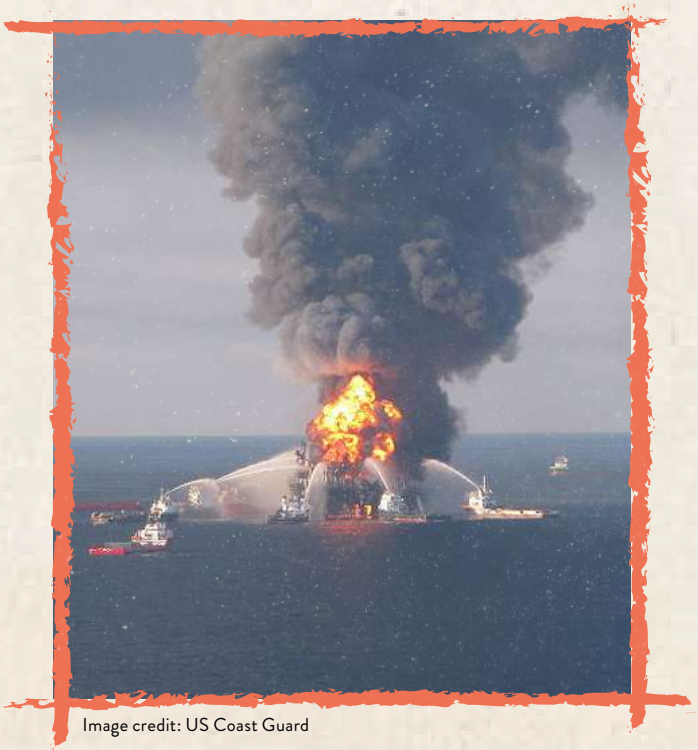


Image credit: US Coast Guard

Globally, this story is replicated through premature deaths, crop losses, threats to water and food security, and disease spread.

The transition to renewable infrastructure requires mining minerals and metals too. Batteries, solar panels, electric car motors, fuel cells, nuclear reactors and wind turbines rely on rare earth minerals and metals that are overwhelmingly sourced from the Global South. In July 2019, at least 43 artisanal miners died in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), due to a mine collapse at an industrial copper and cobalt mine owned by Anglo-Swiss multinational Glencore (cobalt is a vital part of electric car batteries). UNICEF estimates that 40,000 children work in mining across the south of the DRC. Meanwhile, Glencore sees itself as part of the energy transition powering the electric vehicle revolution.

As Sebastian Ordoñez Muñoz has written, communities at the frontline of the extraction of these minerals are experiencing displacement, internal and external conflict (including threats and killings of land defenders and movement leaders), eroded livelihoods, contaminated air, soil and water, lack of access to arable land and freshwater, economic dependence, severe health impacts, and cultural loss as peoples are severed from their land. At the manufacturing level, exploitative conditions with long hours, poverty wages, union busting, and health and safety concerns are endemic. This is also a gendered issue. Women who work with toxic chemicals face reproductive health issues.

Asking public buyers in the Global North to require compliance with human rights standards could be a first step towards re-centring workers' human rights and environmental justice, over the trade and investment regimes that protect profit.[13] What's more, better labour conditions for miners and workers assembling green infrastructure, improved consultations with Indigenous peoples, reduced community land contamination, and the promotion of wind, solar and hydroelectricity over biomass and geothermal energy will no doubt drive improvements.[14]

High-income countries use a staggering 20 times more energy than is actually required to ensure flourishing lives for all.

But this is not enough. We don't have enough raw earth minerals and metals to sustain our current level of (differentiated) consumption with green alternatives. High-income countries use a staggering 20 times more energy than is actually required to ensure flourishing lives for all. We need to move towards more equitable allocation of resources to limit extractivism to the amount that is compatible with our planetary boundaries. We need everyone to have more of the things we need to live a good life, and to end luxury consumption for a few.

[13] electronicswatch.org
[14] Harpreet Kaur Paul, 'Can We Go Green Without Plundering the Global South?,' Novara, 1 December 2020

Land and nature

Land was not always delineated, fenced, owned. In Maori cosmology kinship, *whanaungatanga*, refers to a web of relationships between people (living and dead), land, mountains, rivers, water, flora and fauna, and the spiritual world. Kinship implies care and nurturing in community. Today, Indigenous communities protect 80% of our remaining biodiversity. Punjabi poetry speaks of air as the teacher, water the father, and the earth as the great mother, and Punjab has been a site of resistance to harmful industrial agricultural practices.

"The capacity to love and care for place is radically incompatible with the plantation"
Donna Harroway

The process of transforming land and labour into property, into commodities, through processes of appropriation, possession and enslavement began over 500 years ago. It began with the elimination and dispossession of Indigenous peoples for Europeans to divide land they deemed "*empty*." It continued with the enslavement of, and trade in, millions of African peoples. Land and people became assets in the productions of sugar, tobacco, cotton and more for European markets.

Smallholder farmers – mainly women – operate 12% of all agricultural land, and produce roughly 35 percent of the world's food.[15] The largest 1% of farms in the world operate more than 70% of the world's farmland. This drive local food and water insecurity, environmental pollution (through its intensive use of pesticides and fertilizers), soil degradation, deforestation, and the greatest share of the industries greenhouse gas emissions - roughly a quarter of emissions globally.[16] The industries' control of grains, biotech and industrial food production force out local food producers or force them into indebtedness.[17] The food that is being produced is implicated in poor health outcomes, and a supply chain ridden with workers' rights abuses. 30-50% of all food being produced is never actually consumed by a person, yet one in three people globally face some form of malnourishment, and one in nine face systemic hunger.[18]

[15] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
[16] Critical perspective on food systems, food crises and the future of the right to food, UN Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, 21 January 2020
[17] Vandana Shiva, The Seeds Of Suicide: How Monsanto Destroys Farming,
Asian Age and Global Research, 5 April 2013
[18] Critical perspective on food systems, food crises and the future of the right to food

Continued →

In the 1990s, faced with escalating displacement from the agribusiness, the international peasant movement La Vía Campesina developed the concept of 'food sovereignty.' Food sovereignty prioritizes factors such as local production, direct commercialization, the use of agroecological methods, opposition to genetically modified crops and agro-chemicals, and rights to land, water, seeds and biodiversity.[19] Agroecology can stabilise food production to meet global needs and reduce waste, and reduce deforestation, water scarcity, soil depletion and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.[20]

There is hope, attempts to deregulate agricultural markets and open them up even further to private corporations in India led to millions of people taking to the streets in Punjab in 2020 and 2021. Calls to recognise **Ecocide** - in light of species, ocean and biodiversity loss, pollution, extraction, deforestation, dangerous chemical and other waste, among other things - are growing. Practices to remember taken lands, campaigns for **LANDBACK** for Indigenous communities, as well as movements promoting democratised access to land to repair inequities within the Global North are spreading too.

[13] La Via Campesina
[14] World Economic Forum

Image credit: Joanna B. Pinneo / Cavan

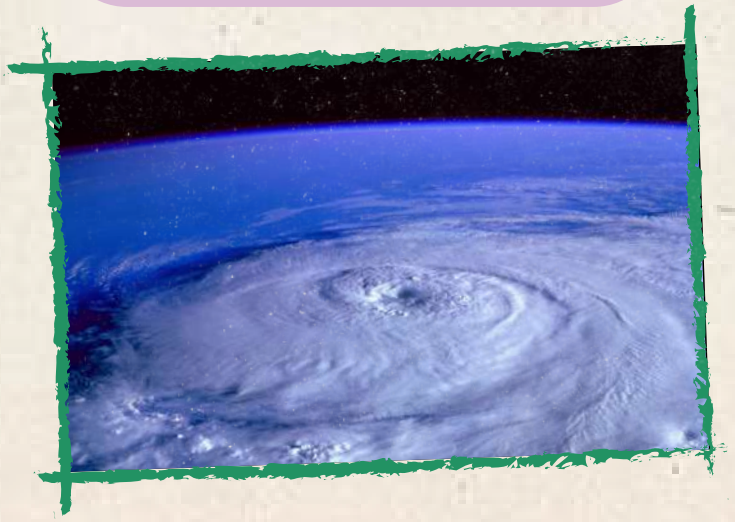
Social Justice

Climate change magnifies and multiplies marginalisations. Poverty, gender, age, living with a disability, geography, Indigenous or minority status, national or social origin, birth or other status, all increase the likelihood of experiencing climate change harms. Leon Sealey-Huggins wrote in Perspectives on a Global Green New Deal:

"There is no such thing as a 'natural' disaster. Rather, disasters are socially produced by uneven access to resources, and are compounded by inattention to the harms of particular socio-ecological relations."

Whether or not individuals survive storms, wildfires, floods and other extreme events is not just based on geographic exposure to climate change impacts. It is based as much on access to resilient housing and emergency community infrastructure, as well as safe and dignified evacuations among other factors. Alexandra Wanjiku Kelbert (Black Lives Matter UK organiser and University of Warwick PhD candidate) noted in the same publication that:

> "Storms and pandemics themselves cannot easily be averted. But the scale of the destruction wrought, and whether or not an event becomes a disaster or a catastrophe, is based on both the political decisions made in responding to a crisis and the history of decisions (entrenched in ideological priorities in favour of gentrification, foreign direct investment or loans over lifting local people and local solutions) that create the context in which an event takes place."



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Marginalised communities are often also historically removed or underrepresented in political decision making processes. The case of Mozambique is emblematic, as found in this Common Wealth report **Towards Reparative Climate Justice**. In 2019, Cyclone Idai is estimated to have destroyed 90% of Beira, a city of more than half a million people. Mozambique is the sixth poorest country in the world, and highly indebted – yet its coal and titanium mines and agro-industry has enriched investors around the world. The average person in the UK emits roughly 25 times more CO^2 compared to someone in Mozambique. Meanwhile, the people of Mozambique have suffered as a result of this economic model, facing reduced social security spending as the government seeks to repay its debts (especially in a climate of reduced income from its export commodities). In this neoliberal policy space, housing and other poverty alleviation efforts are systematically deprioritised over (foreign) investor friendly schemes that have concentrated wealth in the hands of a few.

When extreme weather events hit, those living in informal settlements are most exposed to death, displacement, destitution. People who live with disabilities, older people, LGBTQI+ communities are often disproportionately forced into informal settlements outside of strong forms of social protection. Evacuation processes often fail to account for the rights of people who live with disabilities, older people and incarcerated peoples. Women, young people, LGBTQI+ people face heightened risks of violence in temporary accommodation sites.

Similarly, those with resources may be able to flee farmlands with crops increasingly faltering in the face of creeping salt water. Meanwhile, those without the ability to pay for bus tickets out of impacted areas, disproportionately **women**, are trapped in increasingly inhospitable areas where the struggle for survival continues alongside unpaid caring responsibilities. Those who have to work outside in soaring temperatures, those in homes without insulation, those without insurance are also disproportionately impacted by annually record breaking **temperatures**.

The average person in the UK emits roughly

25 times more

CO^2 compared to someone in Mozambique

In the UK and USA, economically marginalised people of colour are also disproportionately exposed to higher levels of air pollution and other environmental hazards, poor housing conditions, healthcare deprivation or discrimination, and precarious work. **Black** and **LGBTQI+** communities have also cited discrimination in access to aid and shelter in the aftermath of storms in the USA. Our failure to tackle the causes of inequality subject future generations to unimaginational climate harms.

[13] La Via Campesina
[14] World Economic Forum

Health and wellbeing

Covid-19 has shown how those most marginalised are disproportionately impacted, a story replicated with climate change. Climate change is the **number one threat to public health this century.** In the Arctic, food and waterborne diseases, malnutrition, injury, and mental health challenges especially among Indigenous peoples have increased. Covid-19 has also raised **concerns** about the **link** between the climate crisis, deforestation and the spread of **infectious diseases**, particularly zoonotic (animal-transmitted) diseases. Studies show that biodiversity and habitat losses create the ideal conditions to exacerbate their spread, while warming temperatures also foster a supportive environment for dengue, yellow fever, and several other diseases. As we saw with Covid-19, exposure to risks is not evenly distributed across the population. Those that need to work outside in rising heat, or who live with poor insulation (in lovingly but precariously put-together) housing, those that do not have access to green space, or universal healthcare, are most exposed to harm.

As we saw with Covid-19, exposure to risks is not evenly distributed across the population.

Environmental justice advocates have long pointed out that impoverished communities, with large proportions of people of colour, have long lived in "sacrifice zones," subjected to higher levels of exposure to dangerous pollution from industrial waste and other chemicals alongside disinvestment. This results in greater health risks and lower levels of life expectancy. Climate injustice manifests with striking parallels.

In July 2021, poet **Selina Nwulu** wrote that Shell can extract billions of dollars worth of oil in the Niger Delta, yet leave communities impoverished and left to pick up the costs of oil spills, gas flares, damaged farmland, and polluted water, which cause a variety of health issues. Similarly, she argued, communities in Southall and Hayes, west London, are exposed to pollution from the redevelopment of a former gasworks site in the area, resulting in poor health outcomes.

Continued →

In April 2021, writer and activist Maja Darlington wrote about the ways in which environmental "sacrifice zones" mirror climate harms. She wrote that sacrifice zones can be specific neighbourhoods exposed to toxic chemicals like "cancer alley" – a region along the Mississippi River where pollution from surrounding petrochemical plants is so great that the risk of cancer in some places is 50x the national average. Sacrifice zones can also be entire countries, namely those that already experience the worst effects of climate change like Bangladesh – where rising sea levels and extreme weather such as severe storms, cyclones, drought and landslides are expected to displace one in seven people by 2050.

Scientists at fossil fuel companies knew the consequences of continued coal, oil and gas extraction more than forty years ago. Fossil fuelled capitalist so-called "development" has continued regardless, essentially sacrificing low lying island states and delta regions, as Maja Darlington comments in the quote above. Areas of desert spread in Northern Africa, and temperatures soar, rising to inhabitable levels in parts of the year throughout Asia. Floods, storms, wildfires and droughts increase in regularity and strength, resulting in malnutrition and increasing the risk of diseases spreading in temporary evacuation sites.

These impacts accelerate as temperatures warm.

Air pollution from burning fossil fuels like coal and diesel was responsible for about

1 in 5

premature deaths worldwide.

More than 8 million people died in 2018 from fossil fuel pollution. Air pollution from burning fossil fuels like coal and diesel is responsible for about 1 in 5 premature deaths worldwide. Limiting warming to 1.5°C will bring health benefits, including reducing cases of dengue fever and malaria by hundreds of millions. This could prevent about 153 million premature deaths from air pollution worldwide by 2100, with about 40% of those over the next 40 years. There will also be positive impacts in the UK, with fewer deaths and damage from floods and heat waves.

Image credit: Peter Adams Photography / Alamy

Regenerative systems

Fossil fuels have burned carbon dioxide, trapping heat in our atmosphere, causing global warming. Average global temperature has already increased by more than 1°C. We're already experiencing sea level rise, extreme weather, ocean and biodiversity loss, and species extinction, as well as food scarcity, worsening health and poverty for millions of people worldwide. We need to stop coal, oil, or gas extraction, investment in fossil-fuelled infrastructure like roads and airports, and government handouts for fossil fuel companies through subsidies and tax breaks. We also need to stop encouraging countries to reduce state jobs and wages, privatise housing, healthcare, water and other community infrastructure - through loan conditions - and instead protect and promote resilient and democratic social protection systems that can withstand climate impacts already underway. We must also address the social and cultural forms of oppression that are unjust in and of themselves, and also multiply and magnify exposure to climate change impacts. All these transitions require new ways of thinking and being together and in nature. They require transformations of culture, science, politics, education, economy and social relations.

Transnational corporations profit from health and housing inequality, and also from coal, oil and gas extraction, mining, biofuel plantations and industrial agriculture abroad. The City of London's financial sector continues to bankroll and insure fossil fuel projects. Current net zero transition plans are full of ways to make profit from "false solutions" likely to devastate ecosystems and leave future generations contending with potentially entirely unmanageable impacts.

Continued →

To generate renewable energy within our planetary boundaries, we need to focus on universalising access to the services and activities needed to sustain everyone, rather than prioritising excessive consumption for a minority. Modelling by Joel Millward-Hopkins, Julia K. Steinberger, Narasimha D. Rao and Yannick Oswald **shows this is possible**.

We could have a food system that nourishes all, rather than starving some and gorging others. Land access could be democratised. We could learn from traditional agriculturists (often women), as well as modern organic agroecological farming methods, to cultivate nutritious local food that ensures soil health and crop diversity.

We could build homes that could withstand increasingly strong storms, floods and wildfires. Cooperatives of communities working with disaster risk reduction experts, architects, engineers, construction workers, plumbers, electricians and decorators could work to deliver resilient and dignified housing that generates more energy than it consumes – serving the remaining energy to free and universal childcare cooperatives, health centres, hospitals, social care, galleries, museums, schools and universities.

Image credit: UN Women/Joe Saade

Communities living in places that will not be able to cope with climatic extremes could decide how and where they want to move, while their lost homes could be commemorated. Public transport could be green and accessible. Workers cooperatives for air travel could work with engaged community decision-making collectives to equitably allocate flight privileges. Time not spent on sites of gas, oil or coal extraction – or in producing consumer goods that do not serve the social good but end up in landfill – could be spent connecting with communities. We could collaboratively engage in social and ecological restoration and move towards the Māori practice of rāhui, which promotes rest, repair and recovery, and unlearn the growth imperative that got us into this mess in the first place. Climate action need not require sacrifice. Rather, we might see it as an opportunity for collective flourishing – and for building a planet that can house everyone well.

Climate action need not require sacrifice.

Reparative climate justice could involve moving from competition to cooperation within workplaces, communities, schools and hospitals, as well as the vision and movement towards living in a way that recognises our interdependence with one another and our environment.

Case studies

Case studies

Image credit: Can I Live - Complicité_Fehinti Balogun

Can I Live?

Why don't we talk about it? Fehinti Balogun asks this urgent question and offers an invitation in Can I Live?, a digital performance from Complicité about the climate catastrophe, sharing his personal journey into the biggest challenge of our times. Weaving his story with spoken word, rap, theatre, animation and the scientific facts, Fehinti charts a course through the fundamental issues underpinning the emergency, identifying the intimate relationship between the environmental crisis and the global struggle for social justice, and sharing how, as a young Black British man, he has found his place in the climate movement.

find out more

Case studies

Image credit: N_dau Festival

N'dau Festival of the Arts

Phillip Kusasa, an alum of JB's **Creative Climate Leadership** programme, has been actively working to preserve his N'dau cultural heritage, Indigenous to Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi. Phillip celebrates N'dau culture through dance, poetry, educational workshops, and tree-planting at the N'dau Festival of the Arts, recording and protecting local knowledge that could help address the impacts of environmental change. He worked with researchers to visit different communities and interview traditional leaders, elders and religious custodians. Phillip and his team have developed an inventory of cultural and historical sites that have been protected for centuries because of their cultural and environmental relevance, which have been included in a photobook for schools.

find out more

Case studies

Image credit: Anna Branthwaite

Culture Unstained

For over a decade, this loose coalition of organisations and artists have campaigned collectively to end the oil sponsorship of cultural institutions in the UK, aiming to undermine the social legitimacy that firms such as BP and Shell seek from these partnerships. Their creative opposition to Big Oil's partnerships with cultural organisations has yielded big results: it ended long-running and high-profile sponsorship deals, instigated an urgent conversation about the acceptability of fossil fuel funding, and shifted opinion – and money – across culture.

As Margaret Mead puts it: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Culture Unstained were awarded 'Best Campaign' at JB's 2019 Creative Green awards.

find out more

Case studies

Image credit: Purpose Climate Lab

Air pollution: Choked Up and Love Ssega

Nine-year-old Ella Kissi-Debrah's death in 2013 triggered campaigns (led by her mother) to legislate on keeping air pollution levels to those recommended by the World Health Organisation.

Young activists from a campaign group led by Ella's classmates, Choked Up, are calling for reductions in cars, with increased focus on "a world-class walking and cycling network, as well as affordable and accessible zero-emission public transport".

Musician Love Ssega was commissioned as part of Season for Change to create a project that draws on the tragic effects of air pollution along the South Circular, through the mediums of a new single, music video, a comic, and a billboard.

Ssega's goal was to raise awareness amongst young, local and BIPOC audiences on the issue of air pollution in the lead up to the local elections; creating accessible entry points through culture, centering communities of colour in advocacy and using his platform to amplify local stories from people most impacted by the issue.

Choked up Love Ssega

Case studies

Image credit: Rise for climate barranquilla

Barranquilla +20

Barranquilla +20 is a youth-led non governmental organization with almost 10 years of experience in the environment and climate field in Colombia. They organise and support grassroots movements, campaigns, policies and projects fighting for climate action, environmental protection and environmental education in Colombia and at regional level. Their projects and campaigns tackle the planetary crisis as an opportunity to redefine development and growth paths.

They focus on citizen solutions, particularly feminist and youth-based approaches, using their territorial knowledge, visions of the world, knowledge and experience in responding to local environmental problems. Barranquilla +20 puts the spotlight on climate action at local, national and international levels, focusing on the defence of human rights, rights of nature and ecosystems and intergenerational equity, through advocacy, street art, music and culture action, mobilisations, narratives, climate and biodiversity education.

find out more

Case studies

Women Hold Up The Sky

Told through the eyes and experiences of women impacted by coal, oil and mega-infrastructure projects in South Africa, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, Women Hold Up the Sky explores stories of resistance and communities in active struggle to regain control of their land, their rights and their bodies.

Women Hold Up The Sky has screened at film festivals and events all over the world, building awareness and solidarity with women and communities at the frontlines of extraction.

find out more

What can we do?

Commission justice focused work

Use your platform to commission projects from people on the frontlines of climate injustice, locally, nationally, or internationally. Tell braver stories that challenge the power of fossil fuels. Alongside highlighting the injustice of disproportionate climate impacts, showcase the stories of joy, resistance, and hope.

Image credit: Shirokazan

Ethical funding and divestment

Switch your organisational finances and pensions away from banks and schemes which continue to fund fossil fuel infrastructure. Make sure that your ethical funding policy includes not taking sponsorship from oil, gas, and mining companies. Consider fundraising for climate and environmental justice campaigns.

Partnerships and collaborations

Build new partnerships to enrich your climate justice focus. How could you support deep and authentic collaboration with scientists, or policymakers, or with local community campaigns? Think about who isn't in the room, and make the space for them. Focus on building long term trust, respecting the agency of your collaborators, and making sure that your work has a legacy beyond your funding cycle.

Image credit: Bridget Besaw / Cavan

Continued →

Procurement and supply chains

Investigate where the raw materials for your productions come from, and how they are disposed of. Are you using biofuels which contribute to deforestation in Indonesia? Does production of your sets contribute to the displacement of Indigenous people? Does its disposal process leak toxic chemicals?

Policies and governance

Consider how all of these suggestions feed into your organisational structures and business planning. Invite climate justice activists onto your board to help steer your work. Think about how your other policies connect to this issue, for example, how your diversity or modern slavery policy might also respond to climate migration or environmental racism in your local area.

Image credit:
Raphael Pouget / Climate Visuals Countdown

Join the movement

Sign petitions, offer your venues to local campaigners for meetings and give your staff time off to participate in mass mobilisations. Be vocal in your commitment to justice and inspire others to join in too.

Image credit: Joe Kuis / Alamy

CREATIVE CLIMATE JUSTICE

Resources and acknowledgements

Creative Climate Justice at Julie's Bicycle

Creative Climate Chats

The Colour Green podcast

Season For Change

Creative Climate Justice film series

Lead author: Harpreet Kaur Paul

Co-author: Farah Ahmed

Editors: Vicky Sword-Daniels, Charise Johnson and Alison Tickell

Designer: Kieron Lewis | **kieronlewis.com**

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