Climate Justice 101:
The World We Have, The World We Want

Trainers:

Learning Objectives:
- Learn new anti-oppression vocabulary
- Understand how climate change and systems of oppression are connected and interrelated
- Understand our shared challenges and our shared solutions
- Understand that fighting climate change requires us to reach beyond individual-oriented solutions and address the root causes of exploitation and oppression

Achievement Objectives:
- Critically analyze a case study about climate justice
- Situate SIM and real life examples within the climate justice movement and our broader movements for justice

Time Needed: 1 hour 35 minutes (95 minutes)

Normal = say out loud
Underlined = flipchart this!
Italics = trainer notes/instructions
Bold = key point

> **Anchor:** The ANCHOR step invites learners to reflect on past experiences which relate to the learning of the session. (e.g. "Think back to a time when ____. What did that feel like?")

1. Our Liberation is Bound Together [5 min]

In Anti-Oppression 101 and 201, we reflected on our own identities and the ways they intersect to create our positionality in the world. In this session, we will continue to unpack systems of oppression that operate in our world, and tie them to the concept of climate justice. To begin, let's reflect on these quotations.

"If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." - Australian indigenous activist group.

"Nobody's free until everybody's free"
– Fannie Lou Hamer

Spend a moment reflecting on these quotations, then turn to a partner and discuss what they might mean for our work as organizers.

> **Add:** The ADD step introduces new information and tools for learners to consider.

2. What is the Threat of Climate Change? [15 min]

Before we dive into what climate justice is, let's make sure we are all of the same page about the threat of climate change. At the most basic level, climate change is the catastrophic results of a planet that is heating up due an increase in greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. Much of our greenhouse gas emissions come from burning fossil fuels - coal, oil, and gas. We will learn more about extraction and fossil fuels in Climate Justice 201. But for now: What are some expected impacts of climate change? What impacts are we already seeing?

Looking for answers like: Rising sea levels, forest fires, drought, melting permafrost/ice caps, change in animal/plant life, changes in the ability to grow food, larger and more frequent storms. Write answers on one half of a flipchart paper, and label this side physical changes.

Now, ask the participants to name the human costs of each of these physical changes. Say: Now, what are the human costs of these scientific realities? Who is most impacted, and what might those impacts look like? *If the first physical change on your list is sea level rise, you might say:* For example, if we look at rising sea levels, who is most directly impacted? *Look for: coastal cities and island nations.* What do those impacts look like? What kinds of costs will communities feel associated with rising seas? *Look for: loss of land, livelihoods, and homes. Disruption of daily life, poverty, and increased insecurity.*

Follow this line of questioning with 3-4 more examples the participants provided, in each instance honing in on the human costs of climate change. Write these answers on the other half of the piece of flipchart paper labeled "human costs". Help participants move from "climate change causes sea level rise and changes animal migration" to "climate change will cause a refugee crisis as people are forced out of their homes" and "climate change will impact our food system and could make food more expensive, which will hit poor folks the hardest."

*Note: This also can be illustrated as a [concept map](#) if it is easier for you to draw a map of ideas than create two categories. Discuss with your co-facilitator how you would like to facilitate this section!

*Note: Depending on your audience, you may want to offer participants an image to draw ideas from. Perhaps an image of a neighborhood with some green space, a lake, or and ocean. Invite participants to draw in pairs what kinds of impacts are likely to happen. Then, in a large group ask what impacts they came up with, and decide as a facilitator if it is physical or human changes. This method may be useful for groups less familiar with climate change.

In all of these instances, **frontline communities** are the ones who are facing the brunt of these impacts. Frontline communities are those that face the first and worst impacts of climate change and extraction. They are often made of people who already hold marginalized identities.

> **Apply:** The APPLY step invites learners to utilize the new information in a task, challenge, or focused conversation. (e.g. practice, application, case studies, compare, etc.)

3. Case Study Analysis [20 min]

Have participants break into small groups [not SIM groups, try and mix it up!] to read through [three climate justice case studies - here are three you can use!](#) Have the groups choose the four core roles of facilitator, messenger, coordinator, and community care. After reading the case study, have the facilitator of each group lead the small group through these questions:

1) *What happened in the case study we read? What were the physical changes that the community faced, and what were the human costs?*
2) *Who were the frontline communities your case study?*
3) *What is the root cause of both the physical changes and human costs as described in your case study?*

With five minutes left, make sure to ask the group to make sure the messenger knows what they would like to convey to the group about their case study from their conversation.

> **Add:** The ADD step introduces new information and tools for learners to consider.

4. Case Study Shareback [15 min]

Write Root Causes Here
Write Physical and Human Costs Here
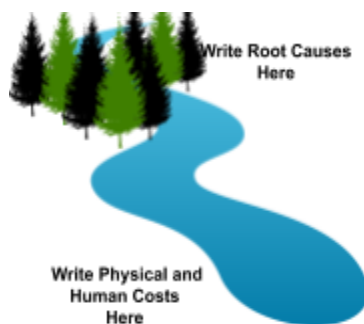
Have each group's messenger share back from the groups conversation. Share backs should include an overview of the case study, as well as one to two highlights from their conversation of the case.

As groups shareback, make sure to ask them what they found was the root cause of the injustice they saw. As groups share, write the root causes and the physical and human costs on a piece of flipchart paper (with this drawing of a river and forest if you wish). After everyone has shared back, say:

Often, the root causes of a problem are obscured. Just like a river, the headwaters are often buried deep in the mountains, covered by forest. As a river approaches the ocean, it grows and becomes more clear. When we talk about problems, it is important that we see their root, their headwaters.

Ask participants: What are the similarities between our case studies? Do they share the same headwaters? Take a few hands, then say:

Climate Justice requires that we address this entire river - and particularly the headwaters, the root of injustice. To struggle for climate justice is to understand the interconnectedness of life and that our task at hand includes not only ecological considerations like protecting trees and rivers but also into the realms of social, political, and economic inequities. We analyze issues systematically, as opposed to symptomatically.

Climate justice is an ever emerging concept, with an ever emerging definition. A simple one that we like is - **Climate Justice: Centering justice in climate solutions.**

We also wanted to highlight two other definitions that can be found in [Organizing Cools the Planet](pg. 19), and in your handout.

"Climate Justice is a vision to dissolve and alleviate the unequal burdens created by climate change. As a form of environmental justice, climate justice is the fair treatment of all people and freedom from discrimination with the creation of policies and projects that address climate change and the systems that create climate change and perpetuate discrimination." - Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative

"Climate Justice is a struggle over land, forest, water, culture, food sovereignty, collective and social rights; it is a struggle that considers "justice" at the basis of any solution; a struggle that supports climate solutions found in the practices and knowledge of those already fighting to protect and defend their

livelihoods and the environment; a struggle that insists on a genuine systematic transformation in order to tackle the real causes of climate change… Climate Justice addresses four key themes: root causes, rights, reparations and participatory democracy." - Demanding Climate Justice section of Hoodwinked in the Hothouse, published by Rising Tide North America

5. Shared Challenges, Shared Solutions [10 min]

Looking at injustice this way helps us to see that all of us here working for justice, in the climate movement, but in other movements as well, have shared challenges and shared solutions. So, what other problems in our everyday life are people in other movements trying to change?

Take a few hands - you are looking for examples like: police brutality, unequal pay, lack of pay, violence, lack of voice, etc.

Thinking about the root of this river (the headwaters), what are the root of these challenges that the climate movement might share with other movements (and all movements with each other)? Why?

Take a few examples, and write them on one half of a flipchart. Answers may look like: corrupt politicians, white supremacy, colonialism, the patriarchy, corporations, capitalism, etc.

This is a great list! Now, what are some solutions that we share across movements? What do each of our movements want our world to look like?

Take a few examples, and write them on the other half of the flipchart. Answers may look like: Autonomous communities that have control over their own resources, healthy and happy communities, communities that are free of police and can hold themselves accountable, communities free of state and interpersonal violence, etc.

Great, these are all wonderful examples of how our liberation is bound together - or the idea of **collective liberation**.

Flipchart what is underlined, and then have a participant read the whole quote from their handout.

"Collective liberation means recognizing that all of our struggles are intimately connected, and that we must work together to create the kind of world we know is possible. We believe that every person is worthy of dignity and respect, and that within systems of oppression everyone suffers.

Collective Liberation is not just a value, but an action. When we work together across the barriers kept in place to divide us, we strengthen our organizing. When combined, our diverse identities and experiences give us the tools to dismantle systems of economic and social oppression, and to create a world in which all people are seen as fully human." - United Students Against Sweatshops

Apply: The APPLY step invites learners to utilize the new information in a task, challenge, or focused conversation. (e.g. practice, application, case studies, compare, etc.)

6. What Does This Mean For Us? [20 min]

"The biggest thing I have learned from nature is the importance of relationships… a given social movement isn't a list of organizations, or campaigns, or even individuals; it's the set of relationships *between* organizations, campaigns, individuals, etc." - Farhad Ebrahimi in *Emergent Strategy (pg.96)*

Have participants get back into the groups they were discussing case studies in. This time, ask them to

*draw a map of our movements for justice. This could look like a concept map, or like a map of the US, or the world, or something else entirely - as long as the map is demonstrating the **relationships** between movements. Ask participants to position the climate justice movement on the map, as well as each of our SIM campaigns, and the case study we just read. Ask participants to also add the movements they have read about on the news, or have participated in in their communities. After 15 minutes, allow participants to post their maps on the walls of the training space. Direct participants to begin to look at their friends maps.*

Away: The AWAY step invites learners to connect their new understanding to the real world context of their lives. (e.g. a personal action plan, commitment, projection into future, etc.)

7. Takeaways [5 mins]

Direct participants to as they look at their friends maps, find a buddy in the room to share the most important thing they will be taking away from this session.

8. Pluses and Deltas [5 mins]

Collect feedback on the training session by asking Sproggers for training **pluses** (things that went well) and **deltas** (things that could have gone better/could be improved/that are growth zones).