



THE POWER OF BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Discussion Guide

Background

In 2019, a group of organizers from New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance, Clean Water Action and Ironbound Community Corporation came together to help shape the most progressive environmental justice law in the country. This story is told from the perspective of Ironbound Community Corporation (ICC) and was created with the hope that the next generation of organizers in our neighborhood, states, and country will be better equipped to push back on disproportionate burden and demand a more inclusive environment and just framework.

We hope that this video and guide will present your community with specific lessons to help ground conversations that can then help you reflect on what levers need to be moved to change the framework of your community.



Grounding Together

After the film, you may want to give people a few quiet moments to reflect on what they have seen and read or pose guiding questions (examples below) and give people some time to write down or think about their answers before opening the discussion.

Film Overview: Reflect on the Now

What did you learn from the story?

What insights did it provide?

Describe a moment or scene in the story that you found empowering. What about that scene was empowering to you?

What are some of the issues that are happening in your community?

What were some of the obstacles that the community /organizers faced and how did they handle these?

How did the organizers get the information out to the community?

What are the most important parts about getting the information out to the community?

If you could ask anyone in the film a single question, who would it be and what would you ask?



Who are Your Allies? Take Action and Create a Plan

Now that you have defined what the problems are and who your frontline communities are:

Who else should get involved? What questions would you have for them? What spaces can you plant your seeds to grow from?

What is everyone's role against the injustices your community faces?

How can you implement bottom-up organizing with your community and amplify frontline voices while being in solidarity with your community and political allies?

How else can you emphasize the importance of the EJ Bill or any bills set to protect your community?

Glossary

- Cumulative Impacts** Also referred to as the cumulative environmental effects, can be defined as changes to the environment caused by the combined impact of past, present and future human activities and natural processes. Cumulative impacts take into account how much pollution all facilities in a neighborhood contribute together.
- Environmental Justice (EJ)** The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. (epa.gov)
- Environmental Justice Communities** Low income and typically people of color communities which suffer a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and commercial operations or policies.
- Environmental Racism** Any government or industry action, or failure to act, that has a negative environmental impact which disproportionately harms (whether intentional or not) individuals, groups, or communities based on race or color.
- Environmentalism** Advocacy of the preservation, restoration, or improvement of the natural environment (please note the difference between environmentalism and environmental justice; environmentalism advocates for the natural environment whereas environmental justice advocates for the right of everyone to live in an environment clean of harmful pollutants regardless of their race, color, national origin, or income).
- Frontline Communities** Places that experience “first and worst” of the consequences of climate change. These are communities of color and low income, whose neighborhoods often lack basic infrastructure and who are increasingly vulnerable as our climate deteriorates.
- Just Transition** A vision-led, unifying and place-based set of principles, processes, and practices that build economic and political power to shift from an extractive economy to a regenerative economy. This means approaching production and consumption cycles holistically and waste-free. The transition itself must be just and equitable; redressing past harms and creating new relationships of power for the future through reparations. If the process of transition is not just, the outcome will never be. Just Transition describes both where we are going and how we get there. (www.climatejusticealliance.org)

Learn More

Remember that this is for the present and the future. We hope that the next generation of organizers in any neighborhood will be much better equipped to push back on disproportionate burdens. Remember that your lived experience is important and all you need is a few voices who share the same experience/passion to come together to organize. We hope this helps you put power back into the hands of your community and shift decision making, so that solutions are inclusive, just and equitable.

If you want to learn more or want to get involved with the Ironbound Community

You can visit: <https://ironboundcc.org/environmental-justice/>

Official Video Link: <https://thesacrificezone.org/icc>

Social media:

 @ironboundcommunitycorp @down_bottom_farms_newark

 Ironbound Community Corporation

