



## **THE NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP AND DEMOCRACY CURRICULUM**

### **LESSON 8**

**Representation, Race and Class Dynamics:  
Nonprofit Strategy and Practice  
(The Environmental Justice Movement)**

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## Nonprofit Leadership and Democracy Project

### LESSON 8

#### **Representation, Race and Class Dynamics: Nonprofit Strategy and Practice (The Environmental Justice Movement)**

#### CONTENTS

**PART I: The Recipe for Lesson 8:** Presents the overview and rationale for the lesson, the learning objectives, background information on significance and relevance of the lesson to learners, and how to tailor the materials to diverse audiences.

**PART II: Nonprofit Leadership and Democracy Lesson:** Introduces key concepts for understanding environmental justice; provides a chronology of the key events, actors and action that have shaped the environmental justice movement; presents case studies of successful nonprofit advocacy on environmental justice issues; and asks nonprofit leaders to look at the implications of race and representation in the governance and practices of their organizations through discussion questions and exercises.

**PART III: Menu of Enrichment Activities:** Offers activities that ask nonprofit leaders to research and analyze an environmental justice initiative; to plan and mobilize a diverse environmental justice initiative; and to follow the solid waste stream in their communities.

**PART IV: Resources for Nonprofit Leadership:** Provides recommended readings on the environmental justice movement and race and representation issues in nonprofit organizations; and a list of online resources on environmental justice.

#### **PART I: RECIPE FOR LESSON 8**

**Lesson 8** provides instructors and facilitators with a suggested **recipe for the lesson** – that is, the ingredients for stimulating new perspectives and critical thinking among current and future nonprofit leaders about the mission and strategic vision of the nonprofit sector. It presents the overall rationale, learning objectives, significance and relevance of the suggested lesson plan. The recipe approach offers flexibility for making the lesson available to multiple audiences (e.g. academic, practitioner). For instance, instructors can shape and tailor the lessons to the specific levels (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, practitioner) and experiences of their learners.

**Lesson 8** uses an experiential approach that draws on nonprofit leaders' practical insights and knowledge to examine how these leaders define and work

to enhance democracy and social justice from the community to the national levels. By focusing on different contemporary issues – such as environmental justice campaigns – this lesson facilitates learners’ analysis of challenges that nonprofit leaders may confront within their organizations and communities as they pursue strategies to advance social justice and foster democracy.

## **A. Overview and Rationale for Lesson 8**

**Lesson 8** explores the strategies, and practices of nonprofit organizations engaged in advocacy and popular mobilization on environmental justice issues. The lesson initially defines key concepts and compares and contrast different initiatives for influencing the rules and practices of the market economy. The emphasis will be on the types of strategies and resources that nonprofit leaders use to advance advocacy and mobilize popular support for action on key social issues, as well as the implications these issues have for specific nonprofits themselves. Different case studies will be used to encourage discussion and debate about the main factors that lead to effective advocacy on economic justice issues. The example provided here examines environmental justice campaigns.

## **B. Learning Objectives for the Lesson**

### ***1. Knowledge Building, Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking***

1. Enhance learners’ knowledge of key factors affecting nonprofit organizations (NPOs’) work on social justice and democracy.
2. Provide learners with an understanding of key concepts (i.e., environmental justice, NIMBY, and SLAPP) and points of conflict in the environmental justice movement.
3. Enable learners to think critically about what constitutes meaningful progress on environmental and racial justice.
4. Enhance learners’ understanding about nonprofit sectors’ (and leaders’) roles as both advocates for disempowered groups and minority communities, and catalysts for empowering people to be actively engaged in fostering democracy.

### ***2. Skills Development***

- a. Sharpen learners’ analytical, political and strategic skills for effective nonprofit advocacy and action on environmental and racial justice.
- b. Apply different approaches to nonprofit advocacy and action according to the particular context, such as organizational, economic, political and social resources and skills at the community, state and national levels.

- c. Enhance learners' capacity to evaluate what constitutes effective democratic change through discussion of the possible criteria and indicators at multiple levels of society.

### **3. Attitudes and Expectations**

- a. Develop learners' appreciation and respect for the values of social justice (e.g., equity, inclusion, empowerment) and democracy (e.g., access, inclusion and participation, voice).
- b. Encourage self-reflection of one's own ethical and political beliefs.
- c. Respect and be sensitive to differences in values, norms and attitudes of individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- d. Shift learners' expectations about what they can accomplish individually – in their roles as citizens, workers, consumers, investors, etc. – and collectively – as members of nonprofit organizations, communities and social movements – to foster democracy at multiple levels of society.

### **C. Significance and Relevance of the Lesson**

Why should learners and practitioners care about these issues?

1. The lesson provides learners with a framework to analyze the implications and challenges of economic justice advocacy for nonprofit organization with a direct emphasis on connecting this issue to the mission, strategy and practice of nonprofit organizations.
2. The lesson challenges learners to develop and to reflect on appropriate criteria and indicators for fostering democratic change from the community to the national levels.

### **D. How to Tailor the Lesson to Diverse Audiences**

The curriculum is designed to provide a fundamental base of knowledge and experience on nonprofit leadership. The flexible combination of the **recipe for the lesson** and **menu for enrichment activities** will enable instructors to tailor lessons for different organizational settings and diverse audiences. This array of possible options will enable the instructor or facilitator to take an active role in shaping the scope, content, format and complementary activities for a lesson and/or set of lessons that can be adapted to suit specific audiences from undergraduate and graduate students, to practitioners.

### **E. Possible Sequencing Options for Lessons by Themes**

In addition, to expand on and enable further in-depth treatment of the themes and issues introduced in this opening lesson, this lesson can be mixed, matched and sequenced with other lessons in multiple ways according to themes or audiences, for instance. **Lesson 8** is seen as part of a broader set of four lessons focused on the theme of advancing social justice. Possible sequencing options by themes include:

- ***Nonprofit Organizations’ Role in Advancing Social Justice: Lessons 1, 5, 8, 9***
- ***Nonprofit Organizations’ Role in Building Democracy: Lessons 1, 4, 6, 7***
- ***“Tool Kit” for Effective Leadership – Summary of Nonprofit Organization Leadership and Strategic Vision Issues: Lessons 2, 3, 10***

## **PART II: NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP AND DEMOCRACY LESSON 8**

### **A. Key Issues of the Environmental Justice Movement for Nonprofit Organizations**

- 1) *What are nonprofits ethical responsibilities to ensure that low-income and predominantly minority communities are not disproportionately exposed to health hazards?*
- 2) *What nonprofit organizations' responsibilities to ensure representation and diversity within their leadership and members?*
- 3) *How is environmental justice related to democracy? How can nonprofit organizations improve the quality of democracy while simultaneously achieving environmental justice?*
- 4) *How do nonprofit organizations broaden the definitions of social justice issues and empower people, while affecting positive change?*

#### **1) Do nonprofits have a social justice obligation to fulfill their humanitarian mission and fight for environmental justice and the health of all people?**

What are the ethical implications of effectively lowering the life spans of many residents who live near hazardous facilities?

The environmental justice movement brings together diverse groups of stakeholders: national environmental groups, civil rights groups, and grassroots organizations. The movement consists of community action by citizens and nonprofit organizations to protect the environment and ensure that residents of low-income minority neighborhoods are not adversely affected by environmental health hazards.

All individuals are entitled to a healthy living environment without excessive pollution. Neighborhoods housing predominantly low-income minority individuals should be subject to pollution and toxic waste at the same level as other segments of the population.

No community wants a sludge burning facility for a neighbor. However, some waste is not easily recyclable and Americans consume in huge amounts. Further, there is profit to be made in industries that are potentially detrimental to the health of those who live near the production, storage, and disposal facilities. Most companies try to build their toxic facilities where they will encounter the least resistance, and where expenses can be kept to a minimum. The pollution-producing industries and hazardous waste facilities are disproportionately located in low-income and minority communities. These communities were traditionally without a voice when siting decisions are made.

The absence of wealth and anemic levels of civic participation found in many low-income neighborhoods make them a prime location for hazardous materials sites because polluters have little organized opposition to fear. Nonprofit organizations are the primary outlet for community organization to exert pressure through the political process and directly against dangerous companies.

## **2) National and local nonprofits connecting. Bridging divides and implications for race, class, and representation within nonprofit organizations.**

In its analysis of the environmental justice issue, this lesson will stimulate thought about how communities influence decision-making about development and location of major environmental health risks, examine the relationships between major national environmental organizations and local grassroots organizations and discuss strategies for action.

Two distinct types of nonprofit organizations are involved in the environmental justice movement, local grassroots nonprofits and national environmental groups. The grassroots environmental justice organizations have far more diverse membership than the larger environmental organizations (Taylor 1999). Bullard says, “The environmental justice groups are more egalitarian, most of them are led by women, and it’s more democratic” (Schweizer 1999).

The national environmental organizations, sometimes with regional branches, consist primarily of middle and upper class whites. Only three of the thirty leading environmental groups had women comprise more than thirty percent of their boards, and none of the thirty nonprofits had more than five staff members from any racial minority (Tokar 1997).

National civil rights groups have not engaged in environmental justice issues. There are prominent African Americans advocates, including Jesse Jackson and academics, such as Robert Bullard who directs the Center for Environmental Justice at Clarke University. However, the NAACP has not mobilized forces in support of environmental justice. Rather, the Louisiana Branch of the NAACP fought against environmental justice advocates in Covenant, Louisiana.

Robert Bullard, Director of the Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark Atlanta University, argues that traditional, predominantly White environmental groups have experienced some conflict with the communities of color. While understanding is increasing between these groups, considerable progress still remains to be made.

All nonprofit organizations need to be conscious of how race and class dynamics limit the representation of different viewpoints within their organizations. Nonprofit organizations, especially environmental groups, must make concerted efforts to recruit individuals of different races, ages, sexes, sexual orientations,

and income levels to be members, employees – including upper-level managers, and board members for the organization.

How do large environmental organizations comprised of predominantly middle and upper class White people assist nonprofit organizations consisting of local residents who are predominantly from different races, classes, and education levels? By acting as a resource, guide and ally but making sure that the grassroots organizations control the direction of the movement, the organizations can have a healthy relationship and community residents will have a sustainable and empowering vehicle to increase their political power.

### **3) Creating sustainable community organizations that improve the quality of our democracy through their fight for social justice.**

The movement's primary goal of improving the quality of life in poor neighborhoods, by improving the public health is important, but the sustainable institutions created at the grass roots level by the environmental justice movement will be its legacy. In many communities the grassroots organizations serve as a forum for airing shared grievances, planning a course of action, and mobilizing to improve the situation.

As Bullard states:

“What we've tried to do over the last twenty years is educate and assist groups in organize and mobilizing, empowering themselves to take charge of their lives, their community and their surroundings. It's more of a concept of trying to address power imbalances, lack of political enfranchisement, and to redirect resources so that we can create some healthy, livable and sustainable types of models”  
(Schweizer 1999).

The environmental justice movement can empower low-income communities and people of color. Some nonprofit organizations that were formed to combat environmental injustice have become sustainable organizations that fight for better lives for their citizens. For example, CRCQL of Chester, Pennsylvania focused on reducing lead poisoning in children, by winning a settlement against DELCO Corporation, a major waste disposal company in Chester, for funding for a lead education program.

Nonprofit organizations engaged in environmental justice initiatives often exercise their democratic rights, seeking to influence decision-makers to block hazardous facilities that local residents do not want. Individuals also engage in the political process by ensuring that laws are upheld, such as the Civil Rights Act, which has been invoked to fight environmental racism.

### ***Handout 8.1: Key Concepts on Environmental Justice***

#### ***Environmental Injustice***

President Clinton defined environmental injustice as: “disproportionate, adverse effects on human health and the environment in minority and low-income communities.”

#### ***Environmental Justice***

Seeks to achieve roughly proportional human health and environmental hazards across economic, ethnic, cultural, and geographic categories.

#### ***Environmental Racism***

Minority communities are subject to health hazards disproportionate to white neighborhoods, even when income is controlled for. A middle-income predominantly African American community is subject to pollution more than a poor White community.

#### ***NIMBY - Not in My Backyard***

The desire for undesirable facilities to be located away from oneself. The NIMBY mentality leads to environmental injustice as hazardous facilities are too often built in low-income minority neighborhoods that lack the power to stop them from being built.

#### ***Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (SLAPP)***

A lawsuit filed by a corporation to stop an individual or organization from speaking out against that corporation. SLAPP suits force organizations to expend significant amounts of time and money. SLAPPs are designed stop an organization’s advocacy against a corporation. The threat of a SLAPP often prohibits individuals and nonprofit organizations from speaking out against corporate abuses. Victims of SLAPPs include people and groups who reported health-code violations, filed complaints with consumer agencies, and/or opposed commercial or industrial developments.

Anti-SLAPP legislation exists in many states so that judges can dismiss frivolous suits before resources are drained. Also, individuals and nonprofit organizations are filing SLAPP-backs “seeking monetary damages for legal harassment or frivolous litigation” (Greene 2000). “While most SLAPPs are legally meritless, they effectively achieve their principal purpose: to chill public debate on specific issues” (“California Anti-SLAPP Project” <http://www.casp.net/intro.html>). SLAPPs weaken the quality of democracy by silencing the voice of the people.

## **Handout 8.2: A Timeline of Nonprofit Organizations' Involvement in the Environmental Justice Movement, 1982-2000**

### **1982 Individuals Working Through Nonprofit Organizations Start the Environmental Justice Movement.**

The environmental justice movement has its roots in the civil rights movement and the environmental movement. Warren County in North Carolina was the location of the first major environmental justice standoff. The state of North Carolina decided to create a landfill to dispose of soil contaminated with the hazardous chemical PCP in the low-income, predominantly African-American, community in Warren County, North Carolina. The community came together to form Warren County Citizens Concerned About PCBs. National environmental activists, civil rights leaders, labor leaders, and elected black officials joined local citizens in their fight to stop the dumping of over 6,000 truckloads of contaminated soil. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) even supported the movement.

Over 500 activists were arrested in demonstrations protesting the planned hazardous waste dump. The landfill was not blocked, but for the first time the issue of dumping hazardous chemicals in predominantly minority communities was raised as an issue of environmental and racial justice. (See Bullard, Robert D. *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality*. Chapter 2, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990. Web site: [www.ciesin.org/docs/010-278/010-278chpt2.html](http://www.ciesin.org/docs/010-278/010-278chpt2.html))

### **1983 The Federal Government Studies the Issue**

After the protests in North Carolina, the U.S. General Accounting Office conducted a study on the relationship between the location of hazardous waste landfills and the racial and the economic status of the surrounding communities in eight Southern states. The results of the study showed that three out of every four landfills were located near communities made up predominantly of minorities (“Brief History of Environmental Justice,” Web site: <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jrajzer/nre/history.html>).

### **1984 Nonprofits and Academics Initiate Research on the Issue**

The Commission of Racial Justice (CRJ) of the United Church of Christ, led by Dr. Benjamin Chavis, conducted a study that showed health hazards are more likely to be located in low-income and predominantly minority communities. Chavis was the first to use the term “environmental racism.” Dr. Robert Bullard of Clarke University conducted a landmark study that showed the disproportionate health hazards facing predominantly minority communities in the South.

### **1991 Civil Rights Leaders Convene**

The first People of Color Environmental Justice Summit sought to move the discussion of siting health hazards from NIMBY – Not in My Backyard – to NIAMBY – Not in Anybody’s Backyard. Before the summit, African-American groups had confronted the major environmental organizations with charges that they were practicing racial discrimination by not including environmental racism in their focus. The relationships between large national environmental organizations and grassroots organizations were solid in some cases and tenuous in others. Many of the major environmental organizations were criticized for not addressing the risks posed to human health and for not advocating on behalf of these affected communities.

### **1992 The EPA Establishes an Office of Environmental Justice**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) created an office of environmental justice (see web site: <http://es.epa.gov/oeca/main/ej/>). Nonprofit organizations were instrumental in bringing the environmental justice issue to EPA’s attention.

### **1992 National Environmental Groups Begin to Respond**

The Sierra Club establishes an office of environmental justice and later creates a national-level Environmental Justice Committee.

### **1994 The Federal Government Expands Mandate for Action**

President Clinton issues Executive Order 12898, “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations,” requiring that “each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission...” (Web site: <http://www.penweb.org/ej/execorder.html>). Despite this new mandate for action, Dr. Bullard argues that the federal government has not done nearly enough to combat environmental racism.

### **Today The Struggle for Environmental Justice continues in communities across the country**

The following case studies highlight how nonprofit organizations have effectively bridged socio-economic and geographic divides to train, educate, and assist grassroots nonprofit organizations that are seeking to address health and environmental hazards in poor minority communities. In the process, these organizations are empowering people to stand up against the powerful.

## **B. Mobilizing for Environmental Justice: Case Studies**

### ***Case 8.1: Chester, Pennsylvania***

Chester, Pennsylvania is located fifteen miles South of Philadelphia on the Delaware River. The city has the highest percentage of African American people in the state with the lowest per capita income. The residents of the city share their space with the nation's fourth largest incinerator, the nation's largest autoclave for medical waste, a sludge burning facility, and a myriad of oil refineries and other polluting facilities. Chester is the dumping grounds for much of the East Coast. The EPA conducted a special study on Chester, finding that levels of cancerous and non-cancerous health hazards were unacceptable.

Concerned citizens formed the nonprofit organization, Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living (CRCQL), in 1992. Chester Residents built alliances, raised awareness, and took the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to court for awarding permits to hazardous waste companies. CRCQL was successful, in part, because the citizen group partnered with college students and engaged EPA officials in their cause. College students also formed alliances, raised awareness, and conducted research on environmental justice issues. Students from area colleges held a conference at Swarthmore College, located just minutes from Chester and formed the Campus Coalition Concerning Chester (C-4). C-4 organized protests to raise awareness of the plight of Chester residents.

Chester residents have achieved several major environmental health victories in the past several years. C-4 and CRCQL have blocked a pet crematorium, blocked a Cherokee Waste Disposal plant, required increased pollution controls by DELCORA sewage treatment plant and sludge incinerator, and convinced the city of Chester to change its zoning ordinances so that new companies have to demonstrate that their facilities will result in no adverse effects to residents' health. Residents from Pennsylvania's poorest neighborhood are now empowered and working side by side with students from some of America's most elite students to address the health and environmental risks of industrial development.

### ***Case 8.2: Convent, Louisiana***

The 85-mile stretch of land along the Mississippi River between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Louisiana is home to over 140 industrial plants. Dubbed Cancer Alley in Louisiana, this region is home to more chemical producing plants than anywhere else in the United States.

In 1999, the Shintech Corporation was blocked from building what would have been the world's largest Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) facility, consisting of three chemical factories and an incinerator. The plant was slated to be built in Convent, Louisiana, which is a small and very poor, African American community. The \$700 million plant was thwarted by a coalition of nonprofit organizations

representing local residents, national environmental groups, and Tulane University Environmental Law Clinic students.

A leading community group based in Convent, St. James Citizens for Jobs and the Environment, opposed the plant. Patricia Melancon, president of the organization said, “Yes, we want jobs, but you can’t compensate for a human life” in contrast to local officials who wanted the plant to be built because it would help create jobs for Convent residents. Convent has a 51 percent high school dropout rate and 61 percent unemployment rate (“Activism on the Bayou,” *Chemical Week*, May 26, 1999). The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the EPA’s National Environmental Advisory Committee, and the U.S. Congressional Black Caucus also supported the residents in their efforts to stop the building of the plant (Cray and Harden 1998).

Greenpeace and the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic co-authored lawsuits against the Shintech Corporation on behalf of St. James Citizens for Jobs and the Environment and Louisiana Environmental Action Network (LEAN). Due to these lawsuits, the Governor of Louisiana, Mike Foster, threatened to revoke Tulane’s tax exempt status and helped convince the State Supreme Court to set rules prohibiting similar future legal assistance for environmental matters by clinical programs.

As in other cases, regional and national groups served as resources to local community groups and citizens in their advocacy efforts to stop the building of the plant. The case of Convent highlights the importance of different types of nonprofit organizations working at multiple levels coming together to address a common goal.

*Recommended Resources:*

Cray, Charlie, and Harden, Monique. (1998). Environmental Justice in Louisiana. *Rachel’s Environment and Health Weekly*. June 4. Web site: [www.greenpeaceusa.org/media/publications/environmental\\_justicetext.htm](http://www.greenpeaceusa.org/media/publications/environmental_justicetext.htm)

***Case 8.3: Detroit, Michigan***

In 1999, Henry Ford Health Systems stopped burning its medical and non-medical waste at its suburban facilities, and instead sent the waste elsewhere to be disposed of using alternative methods. However, Henry Ford Health Systems continued to operate its Detroit hospital incinerator in the predominantly African American community where it was located. Studies showed that children under age 15 who were living in neighborhoods surrounding the hospital were three times more likely to be hospitalized for asthma than a county resident who lived outside Detroit (Barry 2000).

A diverse coalition of local, state, and regional environmental groups and concerned community members banded together to force Henry Ford Health

Systems to stop harming the environment and the health of area residents. Coalition members included Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice, Sierra Club Southeast Michigan Chapter, Sierra Club Mackinac Chapter, Ecology Center, National Lawyers Guild/Sugar Law Center, ACCESS, Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition, National Wildlife Federation, the Virginia Park District Council, and Jewel Ware, the Wayne County Commissioner. The coalition organized rallies, including one on the day of the Great American Smoke-Out, where they hung a banner at a church across the street from the incinerator asking the hospital to “stop smoking.” Organizers’ clever framing of the issue likely helped raise support for their cause. Concerned citizens posted yard signs in lawns around the facility, made hundreds of phone calls, and sent post cards to hospital executives asking that they switch to a less harmful waste disposal method (Doyle 2000). In February 2000, after over two years of advocacy, Henry Ford Health Systems announced that it would shut down the incinerator. Hospital officials stated that community pressure was a primary reason for their decision to shut down the incinerator. As no definite timetable was set for closing the incinerator, nonprofit organizations are playing an ongoing role in monitoring compliance.

The Detroit case shows that people can succeed in making their neighborhoods safe from environmental risks. By combining effective issue framing, coalition building, and advocacy campaigns, community members’ demands for a healthy and safe environment were addressed by hospital administrators.

*Recommended Resources:*

Barry, John Byrne. (2000). Unjust Burden: Sierra Club Joins Growing Movement for Environmental Justice. *Planet: The Sierra Club Activist Resource*, June. Web site: [www.sierraclub.org/planet/200006/environmentaljustice.asp](http://www.sierraclub.org/planet/200006/environmentaljustice.asp)

Doyle, Mary Beth. (2000). “Cleaner Air Coming to Detroit: Henry Ford Hospital to Close Incinerator.” *Ecology Center*, April/May. Web site: [www.ecocenter.org/aproo/incineratorclosing.html](http://www.ecocenter.org/aproo/incineratorclosing.html)

**TABLE 8.3: Case Studies of Environmental Justice Initiatives**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Warren County, North Carolina</b>	<b>Chester, Pennsylvania</b>	<b>Detroit, Michigan</b>	<b>Convent, Louisiana</b>
<b>Background</b>	The state of North Carolina wanted to dump contaminated soil in a predominantly African-American, low-income neighborhood. Over 500 protesters were arrested.	The area of Pennsylvania with the highest proportion of African American people is home to a plethora of health hazards. Nonprofit groups have been successful in stopping three hazardous facilities in the past three years.	Henry Ford Health Systems Hospitals shut down its incinerators in predominantly white neighborhoods. A broad coalition of groups pressured the hospital to shut down incinerator in an African-American neighborhood.	Cancer Alley is home to many poor African American people and most of the country's chemical production facilities. A coalition of nonprofits stopped Shintech from building a huge plant. Tulane Law School's Clinical Program was responsible for much of the legal work that blocked Shintech.
<b>Grassroots nonprofit organizations created</b>	Warren County Citizens Concerned About PCBs formed.	Chester Residents for Quality Living and a coalition of campus groups, C-4	Existing groups addressed community concerns.	St. James Citizens for Jobs and the Environment
<b>How national and regional nonprofits connected with and assisted grassroots organizations</b>	National environmental activists, civil rights leaders and the EPA joined local citizens in their efforts.	The Southeast Environmental Action Committee (SEAC) helped form C-4.	Local branches of the Sierra Club involved in assisting community.	Greenpeace, Louisiana Environmental Action Network, and Tulane University Law School gave legal assistance to St. James Citizens for Jobs and the Environment.
<b>Attempts to Limit Nonprofit Advocacy?</b>	None noted.	None noted.	None noted.	SLAPP suit filed against Greenpeace. The Supreme Court of Louisiana, at the urging of the governor, made it illegal for law clinics to assist most nonprofits.
<b>Additional Observations</b>	North Carolina was the setting for the first environmental standoff and drew national attention to the issue of Environmental Justice.	Residents encountered government resistance at the State level, even when local and national groups were in favor of stopping polluters.	No definite timetable set by the hospital to stop use of the incinerator. Nonprofit groups monitor the situation.	Despite withdrawing from Convent, Shintech planned to build a scaled-down plant in another community.

### **C. Lessons from Local Environmental Justice Campaigns**

The following points are five keys to successful organizing for environmental justice at the local level.

1. Educate people in the community who are subject to environmental health hazards of the situation.
2. Form coalitions of diverse stakeholders, from traditional environmental groups to local community groups.
3. Use scientific research to monitor and document the health hazards.
4. Alert as many people as possible to the plight of residents by communicating through the media, protests, the Internet, and word of mouth.
5. Use public pressure to influence businesses and government by writing letters, holding forums, and making phone calls.

### ***D. How National Nonprofit Organizations Work for Environmental Justice by Providing Assistance to Grassroots Organizations***

#### **Greenpeace**

Greenpeace may be better known for its tactics to save endangered species, but the organization is also one of the few large environmental groups fighting for the lives of those affected by environmental injustice. From Chicago to Louisiana, Greenpeace assists grassroots organizations by providing media and legal assistance in the fight for environmental justice.

Web site: [www.greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org)

#### **The Center for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ)**

Lois Gibbs formed the Center for Health, Environment and Justice in 1981 with other activists who fought for the rights of residents living near the toxic waste spill in Love Canal, New York. CHEJ seeks to further environmental justice by providing grassroots nonprofit organizations with the training and technical information they need to hold businesses and the government accountable. CHEJ works behind the scenes to help grassroots nonprofit organizations achieve environmental justice.

Web site: [www.chej.org](http://www.chej.org)

#### **Sierra Club**

In 1991, the Sierra Club was one of many large environmental organizations accused of environmental racism, because of the organization's inattention to the environmental justice movement and its lack of diverse representation within the

organization and its leadership. The Sierra Club acknowledged its lack of responsiveness on environmental justice and took significant steps to address these issues. Today, the Sierra Club convenes a national-level environmental justice committee, manages environmental justice branches in four cities, and provides grants to nonprofit organizations to fight environmental injustice. The grants are used to increase public awareness and fund community monitoring programs. Also, local branches of the Sierra Club are fighting for environmental justice. Kirsten Replogle, chair of the Sierra Club's Environmental Justice Committee, says the organization tries to play an unobtrusive role by doing the following things: "provide assistance for communities that ask for it, respect and encourage leadership already present within the community and always allow the community to speak for itself" (Barry 2000).

Web site: [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What strategies have led to effective advocacy on environmental justice issues?
2. How can communities affected by environmental injustice gain greater voice in the decision-making processes?
3. What implications does the environmental justice movement have for relationships between large nonprofits and grassroots nonprofits?
4. What implications does the issue of environmental justice raise for the mission, governance and practice of your organization?
5. What mechanisms can ensure the participation of low-income and minority people in the leadership of your organization and its activities?
6. What new issues do you think will be incorporated into the movement for social justice in the next decade? Why?
7. Are most people in your community aware of local and/or national environmental justice issues? How can nonprofit organizations raise awareness of environmental justice issues?
8. Does the local nonprofit hospital that disposes of infectious wastes have a responsibility to join with other nonprofit and community organizations to combat environmental injustice?
9. Which values does the environmental justice movement elevate? Which values does it denigrate?
10. Should one's health and longevity depend on the neighborhood in which he or she lives?

11. Are there any undesirable facilities in your neighborhood? Why do you think this is the case?
12. How does one determine the threshold for detrimental health and environmental effects to determine if environmental injustice exists?
13. Are members of different races and classes victims of environmental or infrastructure (i.e. roads are poorly maintained, light bulbs are slow to be replaced) discrimination in your community? If so, how, and what could a nonprofit organization or coalition of nonprofit organizations do to increase equitable treatment?
14. How does the concept of environmental justice relate to democracy?
15. Does the environmental justice movement have a responsibility to advocate for the environment everywhere?

### **PART III: MENU OF ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES: Lesson 8**

#### ***Activity 8.1: Research and Analyze an Environmental Justice Initiative***

You are asked to conduct research on an environmental justice initiative in your community or state and analyze the role played by nonprofit organizations. Analyze why the movement was successful, partially successful, or unsuccessful. What criteria will you use to evaluate this initiative?

#### ***Activity 8.2: Mobilizing a Diverse Environmental Justice Initiative***

You are the leader of a nonprofit organization that is planning to mobilize an environmental justice initiative to address the concerns of low-income, people of color in your community. You are asked to create a plan to bring together and mobilize diverse groups of your community for this initiative.

1. What are ways in which you can bridge class, race, age, or geographic divides in this process?
2. What mechanisms can ensure the participation of low-income and minority people in the leadership of your organization and its activities?

#### ***Activity 8.3: Follow the Solid Waste Stream***

You are asked to conduct research on how and where your university or nonprofit organization disposes of its solid waste. Present the results of your research to a community group, your university, or your nonprofit organization. Your research should address the following questions:

1. What implications, if any, does this issue have for environmental justice?
2. What potential health risks does this solid waste stream pose?
3. Who is responsible for collection and disposal of this solid waste?
4. Does the solid waste stream disproportionately affect the health of a certain segment of society?
5. What steps can be taken to handle (and reduce) the solid waste stream in an environmentally responsible manner?

Write a letter to the editor to raise awareness about this environmental justice issue.

## PART IV: RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### A. Suggested Readings:

#### 1. Environmental Justice for Whom? Community Activism and Environmental Quality

Bullard, Robert. (1990). *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Bullard, Robert, ed. (1994). *Unequal Protection: Environmental Justice and Communities of Color*. San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.

Bunyan, Bryant, ed. (1995). *Environmental Justice: Issues, Policies, and Solutions*. Washington, DC: Earth Island Press.

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Web site: [www.casp.net/intro.html](http://www.casp.net/intro.html)

"General Information on SLAPPs." Contains links to resources to fight SLAPPs and a bibliography on SLAPPs.  
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## **B. Videos on Environmental Justice Issues**

Bahar, Robert, and George McCollough (1996). *Laid to Waste*. 53 minutes, Video.

A documentary that explores environmental injustice and grassroots action by neighborhood groups in Chester, PA.

Web site: [www.penweb.org/chester/documentary.html](http://www.penweb.org/chester/documentary.html)

### C. On-Line Resources on the Environmental Justice Movement

#### *Environmental Racism in Chester, PA*

- What are Environmental Justice and Environmental Racism?  
Web site: [www.penweb.org/ej](http://www.penweb.org/ej)

#### *Environmental Justice Resource Center*

Web site: [www.ejrc.cau.edu](http://www.ejrc.cau.edu)

- Neal, Ruth, and April Allen (1998). *Environmental Justice: An Annotated Bibliography 1980-1998*. Environmental Justice Resource Center, Clark Atlanta University. January 1996, updated June 1998. A very comprehensive annotated bibliography.  
Web site: [www.ejrc.cau.edu/annbib.html](http://www.ejrc.cau.edu/annbib.html)

#### *Environmental Defense Fund*

- An interactive web site for locating environmental health hazards in your community.  
Web site: [www.scorecard.org/](http://www.scorecard.org/)

#### *Greenpeace*

- Cray, Charlie, and Monique Harden. (1998). Environmental Justice in Louisiana. *Rachel's Environment and Health Weekly*, June 4.  
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#### *Institute for Democratic Renewal*

- *15 Tools for Creating Healthy, Productive Interracial/Multicultural Communities: A Primer for Revitalizing Democracy from the Ground Up*. Claremont, CA: Institute for Democratic Renewal, Claremont Graduate School.  
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#### *Sierra Club*

- McCloskey, Mike. "New Challenges to the Environmental Justice Movement." Web site:  
[www.sierraclub.org/environmental\\_justice/newsletter/mccloskey.asp](http://www.sierraclub.org/environmental_justice/newsletter/mccloskey.asp)