

Climate Injustice



Vocab

Environmental & Climate injustice

The fact that some communities and groups are disproportionately subjected to higher levels of environmental risk than others. Activism ties environmental issues with other social justice issues, addresses difference in climate harm for different groups and countries, focuses on inclusive discussion and solutions, and emphasizes who is causing the issue.



HDI - Human Development Index

A summary measure of average achievement in "key dimensions of human development": A long and healthy life measured by life expectancy, access to education measured by expected years of schooling vs. average years of schooling of the adult population, and a decent standard of living.

Greenhouse Gases

Gaseous compounds that trap heat in the atmosphere, absorb infrared radiations, and contribute to the greenhouse effect - like wrapping a blanket around Earth. As more greenhouse gases are released into the atmosphere, the Earth warms. These gases include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxides, and water vapor.





Issues

Black & brown neighborhoods

- Hazardous Waste Facilities, Pipelines
- Ex. Cancer Alley, Louisiana: 85 mile stretch of pollution
 - ◆ Oil refineries, petrochemical plants - plastic.
 - ◆ Cancer rate 50x national average.
- Lack of Proper Waste Systems
 - ◆ 1990 regulation limited local landfills # → rise in private companies transporting waste across state lines.
 - ◆ Ingesting toxins from leftover trash
 - Air/water pollution, respiratory diseases, infections
 - Vermin - mice & rodents, roaches
- Lack of Access to Nutritious Foods
 - ◆ Affordable local fast food and groceries are more processed
 - ◆ Type II diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, cardiovascular disease, unhealthy weight gain, cancers



issues: U.S. pollution



- Worsens health, lowers life expectancy
- 100,000 premature deaths in the U.S. linked to air pollution:
 - Cardiovascular & respiratory disease, cancers, adverse birth outcomes, cognitive decline, dementia, covid.
- Environmental Health Perspectives - University of Washington
 - Modeled concentrations of air pollutants, exposure levels for different races
 - Most exposed was a POC group for all pollutants w/ racial disparities in all states
 - Race is the largest determinant factor for who lives with the most air pollution
 - Freeway pollution, polluting businesses put in neighborhoods w/o considering risk
- Changes of six pollutants between 1990-2010 study
 - Larger disparities in urban areas vs. rural
 - California and New York had very large racial differences
 - The U.S. has reduced pollution since the 1970 Clean Air Act.
 - However, the racial gap has not closed.

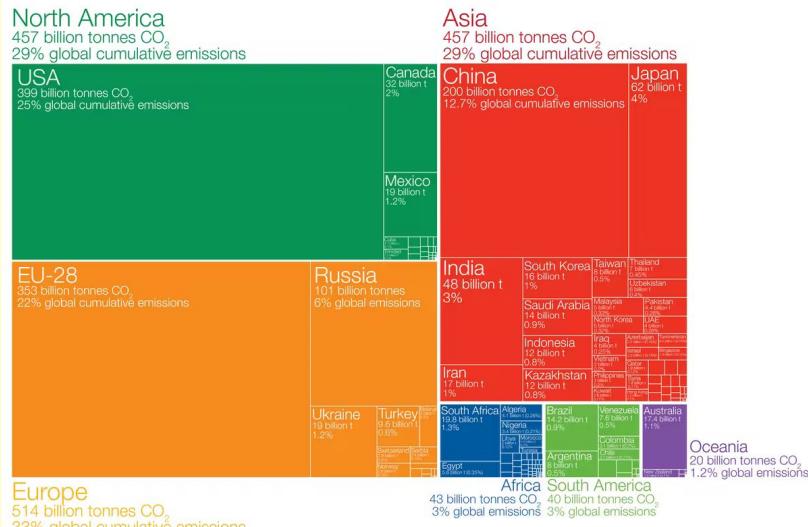


cause vs. affect

- ❑ Those most suffering have done the least to cause the issue
- ❑ Greenhouse gas emissions per capita (per person)
 - ❑ China is the largest gas emitting country;
 - ❑ However U.S., Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Australia, Canada have 2x+ China's per capita emissions and 100x+ several countries in Africa.
 - ❑ Most emissions from fossil fuels - powers industries, stores, homes, schools, producing goods, services, transportation, infrastructure, food, etc.
- ❑ The U.S. has emitted over 25% of greenhouse gases since 1750s. The entirety of Africa has only emitted 3%.
- ❑ CO₂ emissions stay in the atmosphere for hundreds of years continuously warming the planet - greenhouse effect.

Who has contributed most to global CO₂ emissions?

Cumulative carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions over the period from 1751 to 2017. Figures are based on production-based emissions which measure CO₂ produced domestically from fossil fuel combustion and cement, and do not correct for emissions embedded in trade (i.e. consumption-based). Emissions from international travel are not included.



Figures for the 28 countries in the European Union have been grouped as the 'EU-28' since international targets and negotiations are typically set as a collaborative target between EU countries. Values may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Data source: Calculated by Our World in Data based on data from the Global Carbon Project (GCP) and Carbon Dioxide Analysis Center (CDIAC). This is a visualization from OurWorldInData.org, where you find data and research on how the world is changing.

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cause vs. affect



How rising emissions intersect with human development

Countries rating low on the United Nations' Human Development Index (HDI) also have the lowest carbon dioxide emissions per capita. The bottom 17 countries are all in Africa. Countries with the highest emissions are predominantly fossil fuel producers, led by Qatar.

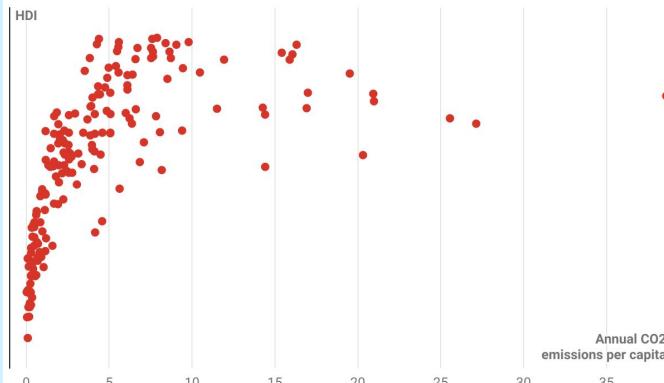


Chart: The Conversation/CC-BY-ND • Source: UNDP

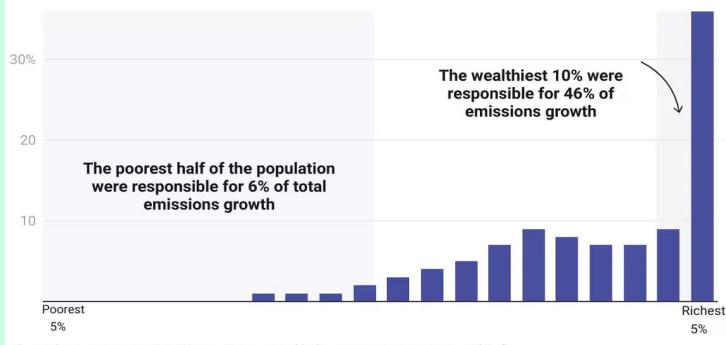
- ★ As country's emissions get higher, the emissions are less tied to human well-being (HDI). High emitting countries can reduce emissions without reducing the population's well-being as opposed to lower-income and emitting countries.
 - Would be unjust to require low-income countries to cut essential investments: education, electricity, health care while higher-income counties enjoy more consumerist lifestyles and privileges.
 - Bottom 17 are countries in Africa, Highest are in fossil fuel producers, Qatar

cause vs. effect

- Wealthiest 5% of the population is responsible for 36% of greenhouse gas emissions, wealthiest 10% for half.
- Least wealthy bottom half of the population is responsible for less than 6%
 - Lack of access to energy vs. luxury air travel, second homes, personal transportation
- Over $\frac{1}{3}$ of global carbon emissions can be traced to 20 companies - mostly oil and gas producers - policies needed to hold large corporations more accountable.

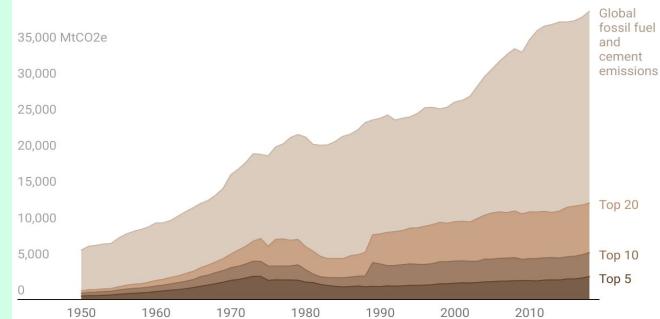
Who bears responsibility for carbon emissions growth?

From 1990 to 2015, the wealthiest 5% of the global population were responsible for 36% of global emissions growth, an analysis by Stockholm Environment Institute and Oxfam found. Together, the wealthiest 10% accounted for almost half of the emissions growth.



20 companies account for one-third of emissions

Just 20 companies were responsible for one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels and cement in 2018, the Carbon Majors report found. The Top 5 were responsible for 8% and the Top 10 for 16%.



Top 20 investor- and state-owned emitters, starting with the largest: Saudi Aramco, Chevron, Gazprom, ExxonMobil, National Iranian Oil, BP, Royal Dutch Shell, Coal India, Pemex, Petroleos de Venezuela, PetroChina, Peabody Energy, ConocoPhillips, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait Petroleum, Iraq National Oil, Total SA, Sonatrach, BHP Billiton and Petrobras. Gazprom emissions count begins in 1989.

Chart: The Conversation/CC-BY-ND • Source: Climate Accountability Institute

cause vs. affect

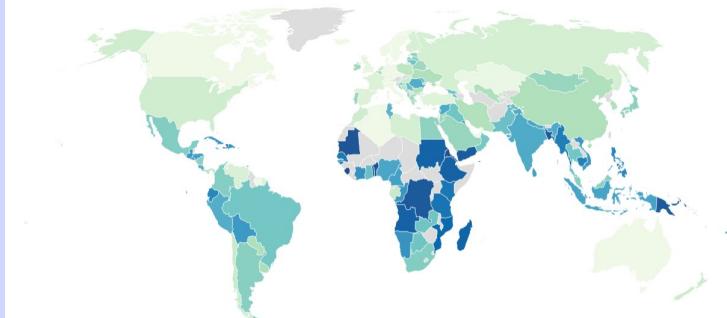
- ❖ Poor countries and regions at greater risk from climate change - worse issues, lack of resources, rarely a large cause of the problem
- ❖ Tuvalu & Marshall Islands threatened by sea level rise.
- ❖ Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arctic, South Asia, mountain regions, face more rapid climate change
- ❖ Racial injustice and colonialism contribute to who is more well equipped to protect themselves from climate harms.
- ❖ Many of the countries at harm are not involved in crucial decision making.
- ❖ Relies on the people least likely to listen - the wealthiest most privileged individuals and the biggest corporations and countries. A lot would come from them reducing emissions, excessive lifestyles - multiple vehicles & homes.

The countries most vulnerable amid climate change

Scientists assessed countries' vulnerability based on food security, water availability, human health and living conditions, ecosystem services and infrastructure, including energy. The most vulnerable are in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and small island states.

Vulnerability index score

1 1.81



Vulnerability rises with higher scores. Data not available for regions in gray.
Map: The Conversation/CC-BY-ND • Source: Edmonds, Lovell and Lovell, 2020

Left Out of the Discussion

Unequal Representation in the Sustainability Movement

- Environmentalism is white dominated
- Silencing - Black and brown communities spoke up about increased health risks and disparities for years without recognition.
- Sustainable companies put Black and brown faces in videos to seem like they're inclusive with a lack of behind the scenes effort to create actual representation

Groups feared "concerns about racial justice would distract from efforts to reduce emissions"

- Mentality shunned groups most affected
- We only have one planet and time is running out. Ignoring the intersection of POC and environmental issues will worsen the problem as solutions have to overlap to fully address the issue. The voices of people of color who are most affected are crucial including experienced indigenous voices with a long history of studying, living alongside, and helping the environment through traditional ecological knowledge.

Wealthy countries are slow to meet a commitment of \$100 billion a year for developing countries, climate harm increases. The discussion for investing in renewable energy needs to include low-income countries in need of financial assistance. Discussions are happening at Nation's Glasgow climate conference COP26, but it's not enough.



Thought Questions

- ❑ Is it surprising that California and New York have some of the largest racial & ethnic pollution exposure disparities? Why might this be?
- ❑ Is there a way to fight climate change without changing the minds of the wealthiest and biggest corporations? If so, how? If not, can we convince them?
- ❑ What is the importance of understanding who is causing the issue and/or who is most affected?
- ❑ What examples of the affects of climate harms on POC have you seen? How are you affected? How are you not affected? How much of this is because of your race, ethnicity, state and/or country you live in?

Climate activists of color, sustainable POC owned businesses to check out!

- ❑ Yashi!! [@yahshibakes](#) (Vegan cookieess! love her, support her)
- ❑ Kristy Drutman, Xiye Bastida, Vanessa Nakate, Mitzi Jonelle Tan, Mikaela Loach, Jamie Margolin, Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson / [@ayanaeliza](#), Marie Beecham / [@wastefreemarie](#), [wastefreemarie.com](#), Diandra Marizet / [@diandramarizet](#) - <https://www.intersectionalevironmentalist.com>, Isaias Hernandez / [queerbrownvegan.com](#), Aya Pper Co., <https://www.powershift.org/>, Makayla!! [@veganmak](#), [Youth Climate Activists of Color](#)
- ❑ [Sustainable POC Owned Businesses](#), [Black & POC Owned](#), [Black-owned](#), [Eco-friendly](#), [Black & Indigenous Owned](#)

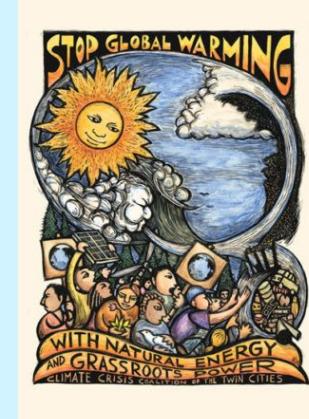


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Liz Chicaje Churayz



Climate Activist

About Liz!

Liz Chicaje was born in 1982 and is a member of the Bora indigenous community which lives in the north-eastern Loreto region of Peru. She lives and was brought up in the Paucarquillo native community near Iquitos, a city in the Peruvian Amazon.

From a young age she was taught of the importance of wildlife and plants in the forest and she often went to the creek near her house for escape. After primary school, she worked as a domestic servant with her sisters for a Columbian family. She soon had her own family and went to study in secondary school with her son.





More About Liz!

Chicaje then started off advocating to defend her community from logging. She is now a teacher at a Christian church, the president of an agricultural cooperative, and former president of the Federation of Indigenous Communities of the Ampiyacu River. She has been in many campaigns to protect the Yaguas. In 2018, she won the Franco-German prize for human rights, followed by the Goldman Prize in 2021.

Amazon Rainforest & Bora History



During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, indigenous people, mainly the Bora people, were forced to tap natural rubber from trees. Up to 100,000 people died from forced labour, slavery, and torture. Some escaped into a jungle area which is now Yaguas National Park. Many people died there so it is considered sacred, Chicaje says.

29 Indigenous communities now reside outside the park. They depend on the natural resources and land. For the past 2 decades, there has been illegal logging and mining in the part expected to impact 3.8 million acres.

There is a pocket of megadiversity in the park. It holds 3,000 species of plants, 500 species of birds, 550 species of fish, manatees, river dolphins, giant otters, and wolly monkeys. There are also peatlands in the area - valuable wetlands critical for biodiversity, drinking water, mitigating as carbon sinks, and flood control.

Chicaje's Project - Yaguas National Park

In January 2018, Peru's government declared the creation of the Yaguas National Park! This park protects more than 2 million acres of land in the Amazon and it is near the size of Yellowstone National Park. It works to conserve biodiversity in the area, protect from miners and loggers, and allows Yaguas to capture 1.5 million tons of carbon over the next 20 years.



The creation of this park was made possible by Chicaje who partners with government officials, conservationists, scientist, and researches, and worked with Peruvians across the society. They mapped out a satellite image of the park and she traveled by boat to meet with different communities, organizations, and leaders to discuss plans and gain support for the park. With help, she successfully convinced 23 of 29 indigenous leaders and 7 organizations to endorse the park. She then traveled to Germany for its official delegation.



Citations

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