



## Activity #2 EXPLORING ECO-PRIVILEGE

### BACKGROUND

The growing green economy has made products and services for sustainable lifestyles accessible for many people. But certainly not for all people or for all communities. Often, those benefiting from access to these products and services are unaware that this access is a privilege – a privilege not enjoyed by significant numbers of people in communities across the country.

A just green economy is one that reaches all communities. By examining and understanding it, people currently benefiting from Eco-Privilege can help ensure that the Green Wave truly does lift all boats.

### ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

In this activity students determine if they are beneficiaries of Eco-Privilege.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

- \* Students explore the concept of Eco-Privilege
- \* Students examine their own relationship to Eco-Privilege

### KEY CONCEPTS

- \* Eco-Privilege

### TIME

1 class period

### MATERIALS

- \* Reclaim the Future's EXPLORING ECO-PRIVILEGE HANDOUT
- \* Masking tape (For Option #2)

### EXTENSIONS

- 1 Have students copy the EXPLORING ECO-PRIVILEGE HANDOUT and give it to their family members or friends. Collect all the HANDOUTS and have students map the results to see their community's collective experience.

### RESOURCES

[www.reclaimthefuture.org](http://www.reclaimthefuture.org)

[www.ejnet.org/ej/](http://www.ejnet.org/ej/)

[www.scorecard.org/community/ej-index.tcl](http://www.scorecard.org/community/ej-index.tcl)

[www.apen4ej.org/](http://www.apen4ej.org/)

[www.ccej.org](http://www.ccej.org)

[www.urbanhabitat.org](http://www.urbanhabitat.org)

PROCESS

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**Option #1**

- 1 Introduce the activity. (4)
  - 2 Distribute the EXPLORING ECO-PRIVILEGE HANDOUT. (5)
  - 3 Ask students to silently read through the list on their own, following the simple instructions. (15)
  - 4 Pair students up in dyads or triads and ask them to share what they discovered. (10)
  - 5 Lead a class discussion on Eco-Privilege. Sample questions: Were you surprised by the questions or your personal results? Were most people in our class Eco-Privileged (or not)? Do you think our class represents the majority of people in our community? (15)
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**Option #2**

- 1 Introduce the activity. (Note: Teacher should assess the “safety” of the group when choosing this option, as there is a much higher level of personal disclosure.) (2)
- 2 Declare that one side of the room corresponds to “I agree with the statement read/It applies to me,” and the other side of the room corresponds to “I disagree with the statement read/It does not apply to me.” Tell group that this activity will be done IN SILENCE. (1)
- 3 Have students begin by standing clearly on one side of the room or the other. Read the first statement aloud and ask people to move to whatever side of the room relates to their personal experience. (2)
- 4 Continue this process for the entire list. (18)
- 5 Once the entire list is read, have your group sit in a circle and debrief the activity. Discussion questions may include: How did you feel during this activity? Did you stay mainly on one side the whole time? What did you notice about our group? Did people have similar experiences? (20)

## Exploring Eco-Privilege\*

Place a check next to each statement that applies to you

- 1** My family has or could, if we wanted to, buy energy efficient products to reduce our home energy consumption (i.e.: compact fluorescent lightbulbs, low flow shower heads, or energy star appliances).
- 2** My family does or could, if we decided to, generate our own electricity by installing solar panels or mini-wind turbines on our property.
- 3** I often see homes and businesses with solar panels or mini wind turbines in my neighborhood.
- 4** It is fairly easy for me to find organic food and fresh produce (I can go to a local store and assume that these products are carried, or I can go to a store in my neighborhood specifically for the purpose of buying organic food).
- 5** If I wanted to, I could pay the extra money to purchase an organic product vs. a conventionally grown product.
- 6** There are restaurants near my place of residence that have organic food on the menu.
- 7** My family, friends, or neighbors have invested in hybrid, bio-diesel, veggie-oil, or other vehicles that run on alternative fuels.
- 8** My city has invested in alternative fuel vehicles for public transportation and/or official city vehicles.
- 9** If I want, I can fairly easily find wheat-free food, natural skin products, sugar alternatives, raw foods, and sustainably harvested products (i.e.: bamboo cutting boards, fair-trade coffee, organic cotton/hemp).
- 10** Upon finding these products, I could afford to purchase them.
- 11** If we wanted to, my family could participate in a green power pricing program or purchase green tags to offset our carbon emissions.
- 12** I have been inside of a certified “green building”
- 13** If I wanted to, I could grow my own food without having to get on a waiting list at a community garden.
- 14** I have access to groups of people that are actively engaged in “sustainability” issues, and could (if I wanted) participate in groups that discuss buying local, going carbon neutral, reducing our community’s “eco-footprint,” etc.
- 15** I am semi-regularly or regularly invited to attend eco friendly functions – workshops, conferences, lectures, etc.
- 16** People in my family or group of friends/acquaintances talk about or would know what greenhouse gases are, what climate change is, and why alternative fuels are important.
- 17** I can afford and find organic cotton, hemp clothing, or other sustainably harvested materials if I want to.
- 18** If I am a woman: I can afford to purchase organic feminine products (ie. tampons/pads/gladrags/keepers/etc.)
- 19** If I wanted to, I could find a neighbor or community member to teach me about gray water systems or composting.

*continued* —>

- 20** There is a center nearby that offers resources and education for sustainable healthy communities and eco-systems.
- 21** And if so, that material is available in my family's primary language.
- 22** I can easily leave the urban environment that I live in and access a natural setting (mountains, lake, forest, beach), or I live close to these places already.
- 23** I live/work in an environment that is not toxic to my health.
- 24** There are trees and greenery in my neighborhood.
- 25** My community's "community garden" is not in danger of being sold, taken back by the owner, or bulldozed.
- 26** My family has easy access to clean water and/or can afford purification/filtration systems.
- 27** My family has access to a safe, green, open, recreational space near my home.
- 28** I am not at risk for asthma or other health complications related to the air quality of my neighborhood.
- 29** I have easy and consistent access to recycling (which includes: batteries, computer parts, and waste oils in addition to paper, plastic, glass, and aluminum).
- 30** My city or community provides green waste, mulch, and composting services.
- 31** My home is not next to a waste transfer station or pollution producing industry.

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*\* Please note: The template for this list was inspired by Dr. Peggy McIntosh's groundbreaking piece entitled, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack."*